# GROWTH OF MUSLIM POPULATION IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

(A.D. 1000—1800)

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# PREFACE

THE influence of medieval Indian Muslims on Indian social order was active and palpable. And yet its dimension was not the same all through the medieval age ranging, say, between A.D. 1000 and 1800. In the beginning Muslims were few in numbers, indeed very few. Obviously the quantum of their impact at that stage could have been only limited. It grew as their numbers grew.

On the other hand, while the appearance of Muslims in India gave the Hindu civilisation a big jolt, its influence on Indian society continued to remain ever strong. In any society people have to coexist, ideas are exchanged, and different sections of people influence one another's life and thought. So happened in medieval India too. Here the Muslims and Hindus clashed and coexisted; their mutual relations passed through stresses and strains; but they also influenced each other in social and cultural spheres. Side by side, all through the centuries of the Middle Ages the Muslim numbers went on rising. Increase in population is not merely a growth in numbers and, as W. E. Moore points out, it changes not only "the size of social systems.....but also the complexity and interrelationships or organizational forms within systems, usually with accompanying strains".

These ideas led me to the conclusion that in any study of medieval history and society our one task should be to try to estimate how many Muslims and non-Muslims there were and to determine the proportion of Muslims in the overall population of India. Then the picture of Muslims living and working with the majority of non-Muslims would become still more clear. For, "one fact is patently clear. The vast majority of Muslims in India [and Pakistan] are converts from indigenous elements, and the 'two nation theory' has no historical basis."

Population studies of pre-census times are being successfully attempted in many western countries, but in India not much work has been done in this area. This book is almost a maiden attempt at population study of the medieval period. It need hardly be said that to squeeze information on the design and size of population

in medieval times from contemporary sources has been an uphill task. Besides, any study of population of pre-census times can be based only on estimates and estimates by their very nature tend to be tentative. In our computation, however, sufficient historical evidence has been forthcoming for any demographic behaviour. If nothing more, I have at least been able to collect in one place direct and indirect evidence leading to fairly good estimates of medieval Indian population, although the estimates themselves may not always be invulnerable to challenge. However I hope that the uniqueness, magnitude and delicacy of the task would make the reader indulgent and the critic tolerant.

In this study I have found it fruitful to divide the eight centuries of the medieval period into four parts of two centuries each, and study the overall population as well as the growth of Muslim numbers separately for the periods A. D. 1000 to 1200, 1200 to 1400, 1400 to 1600, and 1600 to 1800. These bench-marks are not as arbitrary or unscientific as they look. The year 1000 saw the introduction of Muslims in the cis-Indus region consequent upon the invarious from Ghazni. 1200 witnessed the establishment of Turkish rule and 1400 its decline. Akbar's Age came to a close by about 1600. The two last centuries witnessed the peak of glory and the nadir of decline of Muslim power in India.

A number of friends, belonging to the University of Delhi where this study was carried out, helped and encouraged me in completing the work. Professor Donald F.Lach of the University of Chicago and a Visiting Professor in the Department of History, Delhi University, during the year 1967-68, gave me some Demographic Tables of European cities prepared for his own use. Dr. Ashish Bose, Professor of Demography in the Institute of Economic Growth, went through the first draft of the book, lent ready advice on many points, and helped me in preparing Tables and Diagrams. Dr. Suren Navalakha of the Asian Research Centre placed at my disposal some very valuable material on the growth of Muslim population in Bengal. Dr. Feroz Ahmad of the Physics Department ungrudgingly carried out for me some calculations on the electronic computer, and Dr. H. C. Varma was kind enough to prepare the Index. To all these and many others not mentioned here I owe a debt of gratitude.

*K. S. Lal*

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# PART I

## The Reader

# I

## SOURCE MATERIALS AND LIMITATIONS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The most important source materials for the study of medieval Indian demography, as for the study of any other aspect of medieval history, mainly comprise contemporary Arabic and Persian geographical and historical works. Of no less consequence are the accounts of foreign itinerants, especially European. Many modern works also help in estimating the population of medieval times. These fall into three categories. The first set consists of those written in the pre-census years, and attempting population estimates of past centuries. Actual census reports from 1881 onwards form the second set. Lastly, there are the writings of scholars like W.H. Moreland, J.M. Datta and Kingsley Davis who have, on the basis of the source-meterials mentioned above, attempted to adjudge the population of India during the medieval period.

### Persian and Arabic Works

Arabic and Persian works have been evaluated time and again by scholars of medieval Indian history, but primarily with a view to assessing their importance, authenticity and reliability as sources of political and social history. Here we have to see how far they are helpful in the study of medieval population. Medieval Indian historians, like all others in the medieval world, were not interested in the study of population as such. But on going through their works a little minutely, one does come across a good deal of information, and sometimes even data and statistics, which help in

demographic study. It is from them that we learn that many rulers, for varied reasons, were keen on knowing about the number of their subject people. For instance, we are told by Ibn Battuta that once during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, when relief measures were undertaken at the time of a famine 'all over Hind and Sind', 'jurists and judges set out registering the names of inhabitants in different streets, sending for the people and giving them provisions'[1]. Akbar indeed ordered a regular census in the twenty-fifth year of his reign.[2] Right up to the time of Aurangzeb do we hear of *sar shumari*[3] (counting of heads, census ?), which goes to show that some sort of estimate of the number of people used to be kept. Even though we have no access to such records now, stray references in the chronicles about population trends are not altogether lacking.

For the period A.D. 1000 to 1200 one important source of information is Arab geographers and travellers. The 'geographers' usually travelled widely and collected all sorts of information—on the habits, manners and customs of the people, their religious and social life, articles of trade and manufacture, life at the sea-ports, regions with concentrated or dispersed population etc.—about countries whose 'geography' they were writing. Consequently, their notices on India have a bearing on its population structure also. A few historians also throw light on such events as hint at the rise or fall of population. For example, Alberuni, Utbi, Baihaqi and Ibn-ul Asir all write about the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni and similar happenings, and the loss or dispersal of the Indian population in the process.

From the thirteenth century right up to the eighteenth, however, there is no dearth of Persian chronicles. These are mainly contemporary political histories, but occasionally they give description of cities and towns, figures of revenue of regions and kingdoms,

1. *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, English trs with commentary by Mahdi Husain, Oriental Institute (Baroda, 1953), p 84 Also p. 117.
2. Abul Fazl *Akbar Nama*, trs. in Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own historians*, 8 vols (London, 1867-77), hereafter abbreviated as E and D, VI, p. 61.
   I have not been able to locate this passage in the Bib. Ind. text, vols. I-III or its English trs. by H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1948).
3. Khafi Khan, Muhammad Hashim, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* (Calcutta 1889 1925) II, pp 157 ff.
   Also E and D, *op. cit.*, VII, (pp. 207-533) p. 247.

centres of manufacture and trade, areas under cultivation, prices of commodities, strength of armies, people killed in wars and famines as well as periodical immigrations, and sometimes, though rarely, even mention about rise and fall of population. All this assortment of information is very useful for the study of medieval Indian population, its structure and trends. Listing such chronicles is here uncalled for : those which shed light on any area helping in population study have been referred to in their proper context. However, it may be mentioned that the important contemporary chronicles of the Sultanate period are those of Ziyauddin Barani, Amir Khusrau, Isami, and Shams Siraj Afif, and for the Mughal period there are the authentic works of Babur, Abul Fazl, Nizamuddin Ahmad, and Khafi Khan. Ferishtah, a very descriptive writer, is a great help.

Thus there is sufficient source material in the Persian language for the period eleventh to eighteenth century. Still from the sixteenth century onwards Persian historians tend to become more informative and provide very valuable information helping demographic study. Abul Fazl's first volume of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, for example, gives prices of commodities of daily use, and the second statistics of troops who could be called to duty in field from each and every parganah of Akbar's empire. Even other sixteenth and seventeenth century writers are better equipped with information and statistics on population. In the eighteenth century the position improves still further, and Marathi and Persian works give detailed description of casualties consequent upon Aurangzeb's wars in the Deccan, Nadir Shah's invasion, Abdali's raids on the Punjab and the Third Battle of Panipat. In addition, Muslim writers many times give figures and names of those who converted to Islam from time to time, helping in the assessment of the growth of Muslim population in medieval India.

### Writings of Foreigners

For the study of medieval Indian demography the itineraries of foreign visitors is of great importance. They came to India as travellers, traders, people in search of employment and some even as ambassadors. Some like Wassaf and Shahabuddin Ahmad did not visit India but have given reliable account of affairs here on the basis of information supplied by others ; some like Alberuni, Ibn Battuta and Abdur Razzaq, stayed here for years and have left detailed notices about famines, pestilences, wars etc. Still more important

are their comments about places or regions sparsely or thickly populated.

In this regard European travellers are still more informative. From the time of Marco Polo the chain of European travellers to India remains unbroken. From the sixteenth century their number swells. Barbosa, Bernier, Tavernier, and Manucci, and dozens of other visitors have written about India in some detail. Besides providing usual information about cities and towns, droughts and pestilences, their writings are important in many other respects Landing on the west coast extending from Gujarat to Malabar, each one of them visited one or more than one region in the interior. Some travelled extensively within the country, so that collectively they present a fairly detailed picture of the whole of India. They could also often distinguish between Hindus and Musalmans and so help in estimating the proportion of the two peoples. Most important of all, they sometimes give definite population statistics of cities and towns or else compare many Indian cities with those of Europe whose population figures or reliable estimates thereof are now available. Factory Records of European commercial establishments in India too provide very valuable information of demographic nature.

### Modern Works

British administrators and officials in India were definitely interested in Indian demography, and from the nineteenth century many attempts were made to compute the numbers of inhabitants as well as to assess demographic trends in earlier centuries and estimate the population of ancient and medieval times. District officials sometimes held sorts of local censuses in cities, towns, and villages, and reported their findings to Government. So also was done inprincely states. Colonel Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections*[4] and Reginald Heber's Journal[5] fall under such category of works. Heber has also fixed the proportion of Hindus and Muslims with some amount of accuracy. These writings may be treated as almost contemporary material, for while political changes may be sudden

4. Sleeman, Sir William H., *Journey through the kingdom of Oudh in the years 1849-50*, 2 vols. (London, 1858).
5. Heber, Reginald, *Narrative of a journey through the Upper Provinces of India* second edition, 3 vols. (London, 1828).

or revolutionary, in the study of social, economic, and even population trends, the materials of 1820 or 1830 may, by and large, speak for 1780 or 1800. When Elphinstone wrote his history[6] in the middle of the nineteenth century, he also made an attempt to assess the population of earlier times. But Edward Thornton's Gazetteer,[7] written in pre-census times and published in 1854, is a mine of information for demographic study. It gives population figures of towns and cities gathered on the basis of actual censuses locally held between 1800 and 1851 as well as reports sent out by British officials from India to their home country. This Gazetter contains total population of Presidencies, provinces and princely states, of districts, towns and sometimes even villages. Furthermore, besides giving the number of Hindu and Muslim inhabitants, it also provides figures of Hindu and Muslim agriculturists and those enganged in non-agricultural professions in rural and urban areas. It need hardly be stated that such pre-census attempts help a great deal in estimating the total population as also the Hindu-Muslim proportion in the India of 1800.

Indian Census Reports from 1872 onwards too are important. The first all-India census was held in 1872. But it was non-synchronous, the enumeration extended over two to three months, and it took place in different areas in different months. But after 1881 more scientific methods of enumeration were brought into use. Population figures of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries by themselves are of no use to us, but Census Reports are not merely catalogues of figures. They trace historical background and deduce evidence for any particular or collective demographic behaviour. Information of social, religious, or economic nature collected by census officials, having a bearing on modern population patterns, could also be fruitfully used for the study of medieval Indian population trends.

Among modern writers, W.H.Moreland must be given the credit of doing pioneering work in the field of medieval Indian

6. Elphinstone, Mountstuart, *The History of India*, 2 vols., London 1841.
7. Thornton, Edward, *Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East India Co. and of the Native States on the Continent of India*, Compiled by the authority of the Hon. Court of Directors and chiefly from the documents in their possession, 4 vols. (Wm. H. Allen & Co., 7, Leadenhall Street, London, 1854)

demography. In the space of a few pages[8] he scientifically sifted all the evidence within his reach to arrive at an estimate of Indian population in c. 1600. Some scholars have differed from him, some others have agreed with him, and many census Reports have cited his authority. Kingsley Davis wrote his monumental work[9] thirty years after Moreland's when much more material was available. He has also attempted an estimate of the population of ancient and medieval times, thus helping in our study. The contribution of J.M. Datta to the study of medieval Indian demography too is laudable.[10] Similarly, many historical monographs by modern scholars on medieval Indian history have been of great help. As an example only one such work may be mentioned. Professor Sri Ram Sharma's *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* gives facts and figures about conversions of Hindus to Islam under the Mughals, in particular under Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, helping in the assessment of the growth of Muslim population. After all, our main task has been to collect figures, data, statistics and well-established facts having a bearing on medieval Indian demography. These are sometimes readily available in these research monographs, and are more reliable too, having been cross-checked from a number of sources.

Conclusion

All these source-materials, though impressive in bulk, are deficient in actual demographic data for the period A.D. 1000 to 1800. And yet, as Kingsley Davis has pointed out, research on medieval Indian demography is not just a 'quixotic' effort, or 'an exercise of the imagination.' "It is true that Indian statistics do not cover the whole history of India.....But what country exists whose history is so covered?.....Compared with the world as a whole, India's past population statistics are above the average. Certainly she has had more usable data than any country of equal

8. W.H.Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar* (Macmillan & Co. London, 1920), pp. 9-22.
9. Kingsley Davis, *The Population of India and Pakistan* (Princeton: New Jersey, 1951)
10. Jatindra Mohan Datta, (i) "Proportion of Muhammadans in India Through Centuries", *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, January, 1948.
(ii) "A Reexamination of Moreland's Estimate of Population of India at the Death of Akbar" in *Indian Population Bulletin*, Published by the Registrar General, No. 1, 1960.

backwardness, and this fact constitutes one of the strongest reasons for making a special study of her population."[1]

Indeed, working on the available facts and figures, it is possible to determine the size of the population in the succeeding centuries of the medieval period. And since we also possess some data for the ancient period and definite statistics about modern times we may, by resorting to the old method of proceeding from the known to the unknown, obtain a tolerably satisfactory picture about the middle ages. By working forward from ancient times (on the basis of the demographic data, howsoever fragile), and back from modern times (when definite population figures are available), and taking into account all the factual and plausible figures the medieval records themselves provide, a fairly correct idea of the population of the medieval period can be obtained.

# II

## SOME METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF ESTIMATING POPULATION

Our source materials discussed in Section I are many and varied in nature. However their sifting and utilization for a demographic study of medieval India are beset with many difficulties. Of course it would not be fair to expect from medieval chroniclers definite population statistics ; these are not found in any historical works in any country in the pre-census times. But while our sources are deficient in figures and data, they are rich in facts providing historical background and circumstantial evidence for demographic behaviour. We shall discuss their merits and faults in the same sequence as adopted in Section I.

### Arabic and Persian Works

The weaknesses of medieval chronicles are well-known. Their style is by and large turgid and ornamental ; their narrative is often exaggerated. And this applies as much (if not more) to figures as to facts. A few no doubt are trustworthy but many of them are extremely faulty with regard to figures and statistics ; and almost all of them let their imagination and their pen run riot. Consequently, even when they are not quite reticent on demographic matters, they are neither very informative nor always reliable.

Thus Al Masudi (writing about A.D. 941-42) says that there are 120,000 towns and villages in Sind.[1] Rashiduddin, in *Jami-ut-Tawarikh* (completed 1310) writes that "it is said that Guzerat

1. Al Masudi, *Muruj-ul-Zuhab*, trs E and D, *op cit.* (I.n. 2) I, p. 23.

comprises 80,000 flourishing cities, villages, and hamlets".[2] He also says that Sawalik(Hariyana) contains 125,000 cities and villages, while Malwa had 1,893,000 villages and towns.[3] al-Qalqashindi's *Subh-al-Asha* (completed 1411) says that the villages of Multan are 126,000.[4] Similarly, Shihabuddin Ahmad also grossly exaggerates when he says that the Delhi (of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq) contains "a thousand colleges.....In it there are about seventy hospitals...the chapels and hermitages amount to 2,000...The army consists of 900,000 horsemen...At the court there are 1,200 physicians, 10,000 falconers, 1,200 musicians...and 1,000 poets...In the royal kitchen the animals that were killed daily were 2,500 oxen, 2,000 sheep, without taking into account fatted horses and birds of all descriptions."[5]

Only a few of these figures appear to be correct. For example, seventy dispensaries, large and small, Government controlled or privately owned, of Unani and Vedic systems of medicine, would not be too many for the then Delhi. Even a thousand poets may have been there because we know that Mahmud of Ghazni had 400 at his court.[6] Again since Muhammad Tughlaq could send an army of 370,000 on a single expedition, a total of 900,000 for the whole of his dominions may also be conceded. Else, the testimony of Shihabuddin as well as of others cited is not wholly reliable. But it is not entirely useless. As Professor Karl F. Helleiner points out, the ancients spoke in terms of more and less, large and small, high and low. "They cannot often have mistaken prosperity for misery, progress for decline, demographic growth for depopulation."[7] Therefore, what these writers say is true in spirit if not in letter. They were writing (as Shihabuddin says) about "a most important country, with which no other country in the world can be compared

2. Rashid-ud-din, *Jami-ut-Tawarikh*, trs. E and D, I, p. 67
3. *Ibid.*, p. 68
4. al-Qalqashindi, trs. by Ono Sojes (Aligarh, n.d.), p.24. It may be noted that in 1931 it was estimated that the whole of India (including Pakistan) had about 885,085 villages. *Indian Year Book*, 1931, p. 10
5. Shihab-ud-din Abul Abbas Ahmad, *Masalik-al-Absar Fi Mamalik-al-Amsar*, trs. E and D, op.cit. (Ln.2) III, pp. 578-79.
6. Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishtah, *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi* also known as *Tarikh-i-Ferishtah*, Persian Text, Nawal Kishore Press (Lucknow, 1865), I, p. 79.
7. *The Cambridge History of Europe*, IV, edited by E.E. Rich and C.H. Wilson (Cambridge, 1967) p. 3.

in respect of extent, riches, the number of armies. .."[8] and to impress this idea they gave inflated figures. But though their data may not be correct, their demographic image of India is correct. To quote Helleiner again, "the demographic history of that 'proto-statistical' age requires that quantitative information is supplemented by circumstantial evidence, as well as recorded opinions of contemporaries."[9] That far the testimony of the above writers has a value.

Now large figures or testimony of 'foreigners' in themselves need not always create misgivings. Ibn-ul-Asir did not come to India, but most of what he writes about its geography and history is by and large correct. For example when he says that the population of Banaras was "said to amount to a million"[10] in the 30's of the eleventh century, we may not reject his statement just because today Banaras does not have a million inhabitants. We know on the authority of Alberuni that, besides being a centre of Hindu learning and pilgrimage, Banaras had received large number of refugees after Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion of the Punjab.

Indian chroniclers share the weaknesses of foreigners. They also often exaggerate, particularly when writing about casualties in wars. Of the dozens of medieval Persian chroniclers, it cannot be said that some are truthful while others are less reliable. The same writer may give some figures correctly, in others he may commit mistakes and even wilfully. Therefore, every figure and fact given by medieval chroniclers needs to be put under the minutest scrutiny. We have to cross-check the figures given by one writer with those of others, and only when this opportunity is denied, can the data be accepted only if supported by historical antecedants and situations. A few examples would show how careful one has to be when dealing with medieval writers.

Ziyauddin Barani is an eye-witness historian, but his figures and data are not always precise. When sometimes he means to convey 'a very large number', he gives the figure of 100,000. That in 1297-98 the Mongol leader Kadar invaded India with 100,000 horse,[11] may be acceptable, but when he says that the Mewatis, during Balban's reign, killed 100,000 royal troops[12] he definitely

8. *Masalik-ul Absar, op cit*, (n 5) p 574.
9. *Cam. Econ. History, op. cit* (n 7) p 2
10. Ibn-ul-Asir, *Kamil-ut-Tawarikh*, trs. E and D, II, p. 251.
11. Barani, Ziyauddin, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* (Calcutta, 1862) p. 250.
12. *Ibid*, p. 57.

exaggerates, for neither the Mewatis were such well-organized fighters nor Balban so weak a king as to have let them destroy a hundred thousand of his troops. It may be said that Barani's '100,000' only conveys an idea of the immensity of numbers, and he is usually casual with his figures. For example, at one place he says that the army of Qutlugh Khwaja, the Mongol leader who invaded India in 1299, was 200,000 (*ba bist tuman*), while at another that it was only 100,000 (*yak lak sawar darand*).[12] Similarly, during Targhi's invasion (1303), according to Barani, the Mongol army was 120,000 horse (*dawazdah tuman*), but a little later, on the same page of his narrative, it becomes 30 to 40 thousand (*ba si chahal hazar*).[13] But this very chronicler, in many other cases, is quite moderate in his estimates and is reliable. The whole story of Alauddin Khalji's Market Control as given by him together with the price lists of foodgrains, cloths, horses, slaves, etc. appears to be true.

Let us take another fourteenth century historian, Shams Siraj Afif. If Barani has a weakness for 100,000, Afif is very fond of '180,000', so that the slaves of Firoz Tughlaq numbered 180,000, the revenue from his 1200 gardens was 180,000 *tankahs*, and in his war with Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (A.D 1353), he killed 180,000 men in Bengal.[14] The immensity and coincidence of the numbers create misgivings. On checking up it appears that while the figure in the case of slaves and revenue from gardens seems to be more or less correct, the numbers of people killed in Bengal are exaggerated.[15] To make us believe him, Afif gives detailed description of the war in Bengal. The army of Ilyas consisted of 10,000 horse and 200,000 foot. He was almost lured into an ambush. The slaughter of Bengalis went on for a whole day and in an area of seven *kos*

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 254, 256.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 304.

14 Afif, Shams Siraj, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* (Calcutta, 1890) pp. 270, 296 and 121 respectively.

15 According to Afif the slaves were distributed all over the empire. About 4(00) were in the King's personal service, 12,000 worked in the Royal Workshops, some were employed on reciting the Quran, others were in the Royal Stores (Alim Khana, Ghanyat Khana etc.), and still others were employed as Shahnas, Qiladars and garrisons in such far-off places as Multan, Deogalpur and Gujarat and some were sent even to Mecca (Afif, *op. cit.* pp. 151, pp. 247-72). With such details on hand it would not be fair to suspect, much less to reject, this figure.

around. After the massacre the Sultan ordered his soldiers to collect the heads of the slaughtered, promising to give one silver *tankah* for each head. The troops therefore took to the task in all earnestness. The heads were counted in the Sultan's presence and were found to be 180,000.[17] The chronicler has left no stone unturned to convince us of his veracity. Still the figure seems to be unduly large for Firoz Tughlaq ; it could have fitted in with the narrative of massacres of Chingiz or Timur. And then there is the authority of the *Sirat-i-Firoz Shahi*, which says that only 60,000 were killed.[18]

Only one more case may be examined. Muhammad Aslam's *Farhat-un Nazirin*, written in 1770-71, is a contemporary work for the 1761 Battle of Panipat But when the author says that "The dead lay strewn shoulder to shoulder from the plain of Panipat to Delhi. About ninety thousand persons, male and female, were taken prisoners, and obtained eternal happiness by embracing the Muhammadan faith. Indeed, never was such splendid victory achieved from the time of Amir Mahmud Subuktigin...,"[19] he appears to be trying to convince us about the large number converted, but fails to impress. No other contemporary work (and there are quite a few for this Battle) mentions proselytization on such a large scale. The author exaggerates, but how much discount could be given to the number of the converted is difficult to determine. Were this the figure for conversions and deportations during *all* the campaigns of Abdali in the Punjab, it could be believed.

It must be emphasised, however, that large figures by themselves, though sometimes frightening, may not always be incorrect. In this connection let us examine the statement of Professor H. K. Sherwani, who, commenting on the details given by medieval

17 Afif, *op. cit.* (n 15) pp. 121.

18 The Mss of the National Library, Calcutta, and the Oriental Public Library, Bankipur, of *Sirat-i Firoz Shahi* have 60,000. See R.C. Jauhari, *Firaz Tughluq* (Agra, 1968), p. 51. The Allahabad University copy of the Ms. contains a fantastic estimate of 600,000 which is obviously an error of the copyist. See J.M. Banerjee, *History of Firoz Shah Tughluq* (Delhi, 1967), pp. 32 and 51-52 n.
Yahiya, a later historian, merely says "The Bengalis were defeated, and their casualties were large."
Yahiya Sarhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarok Shahi*, (Calcutta, 1931), p. 125.

19. Muhammad Aslam, *Farhat-un-Nazirin*, trs. E and D, *op. cit.* (Ch 2) VIII, p. 171.

chronicles on the Bhainani-Vijayanagar war says : "If the number of the enemies of the Bahmanis said to have been killed or massacred during the various campaigns undertaken during the hundred and fifty years of Bahmani rule were to be added together, there would hardly be a human soul left south of the Tungbhadra or in the Telinguna."[20] It is true that the figures and statistics of contemporary (and later) writers are imposing, but there are reasons for their being so. The number of combat troops in the Deccan was undoubtedly large—so large that "it certainly demands a large strain on our credulity"[21] Leaving aside the testimony of Indian writers in this regard, Nuniz, Barros, and Conti all place the army of Vijayanagar above a million. Abdur Razzaq (1442), who stayed at the Vijayanagar court for about six months and whose statement therefore can hardly be doubted, puts the number at 1,100,000 with 1,000 elephants. The Bahmanis too had an immensely large army. Nikitin states that in the 1462 campaign the Gulbarga forces amounted to 190,000 horse, 900,000 foot, and 575 elephants. The sultan himself, independently of his nobles, took the field with 300,000 men. Many other facts and data are available,[22] but the above mentioned should suffice to prove that killings in the Bhamani-Vijayanagar war were on an extensive scale.

In South "the Hindus fought almost nude."[23] Such troops formed the bulk of the armies on both sides, and in any battle these 'naked' soldiers would have been killed in large numbers. Civilian population was always ruthlessly massacred, so the accounts about the South say. We come across wars originating in an after-dinner jest and ending with such slaughter that 'victims on the Hindu side alone were no less than half a million' (A.D. 1336).[24] In 1417-18 when Firoz Shah Bahmani invaded Telingana, the Hindus made a general massacre of the Muslmans and erected a platform of their heads.[25] The tables were turned in 1423 with the invasion of the

20. Sherwani, Haroon Khan, *Mahmud Gawan*, Kitabistan (Allahabad, 1942), pp. 24 n. 50.
21. Sewell, Robert, *A Forgotten Empire*, Publications Division, Govt. of India (Delhi 1962), p. 142.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-145.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-35.
25. *Cambridge History of India*, III, Ed. Sir Wolseley Haig, (Delhi Reprint, 1965) p. 393. Also Sewell, p. 65.

Vijayanagar dominions by Ahmad Bahmani, who so overran the country that he used to halt for rest for three days only after he had massacred an instalment of 20,000 men, women and children.[26] When such details of the strength of forces deployed and killings among soldiers and civilians are given by contemporary writers (on whose narratives the accounts of Sewell and Wolseley Haig are based), it would not be possible to disbelieve the great losses in war. It is in a decisive battle that casualties are limited because the killing is over in a day or two. But the war between the two kingdoms was indecisive ; it was a continual affair for more than a century and a half, and killings and massacres, often on a large scale, were its special feature. That people survived in Telingana and south of the Tungbhadra was due more to the demographic recuperation through natural procreation than to the smallness of the numbers killed. A slight exaggeration here and there does not minimise the enormity of the loss, and details of the campaigns lend support to the data of contemporary writers.

In this context it may be necessary to say a word about how the information and data about casulties in war were obtained by medieval writers. Killing the 'enemy' and counting the dead in *field have been a pleasure and a pastime of the strong through the* ages. In primitive societies the victors used to cut the thumbs of those whom they killed, make garlands of these, and wear them as trophies. Necklaces of skulls are also not unknown. Similarly in ancient Egypt, "the military secretaries, immediately after the conclusion of a battle reckoned the number of the slain in the presence of the king. This counting was done by cutting off the hands....."[27] In medieval times we come across repeated references to the raising of "towers of skulls" after battles, or to the actual sending of heads of the killed to the court,[28] which would have helped in computing the numbers of the killed.

Reference has already been made to Firoz Tughlaq's counting the killed in Bengal. In the Assam campaign "khani-khanan ordered that the prisoners should have the heads of the slain tied round them, and be thus exposed to the derision of the camp...and after-

26. C.H.I.,III, pp. 397-98 ; Sewell, pp. 67-68.
27. Sir Hinders Petrie in *Story of the Nations*, p. 33.
28. Amir Khusrau, *Deval Rani*, (Aligarh, 1917) p. 61, Barani, *op. cit.*, (n. 11) p. 321. The fact is so well-known and the references so frequent that they hardly need be cited.

wards put to death".[29] Similarly the sultans sometimes gave cash awards for 'hunting' the heads of the enemy, and the amount disbursed would have provided a sure way of finding the number of casualties.[30] To gloat over the success of their patrons or just to please them by crediting them with extraordinary achievements, medieval chroniclers sometimes might have over-estimated the numbers killed by them, but they always gave figures and data on the basis of some source, official or private. which they knew to be reliable.

Some wrote on the basis of information lent to them by their father or grandfather or some other old and experienced people who were eye-witnesses. Others had friends in government service and narrated events of campaigns in which they themselves were participants and information so transmitted was collected by these chroniclers.[31] Such sources could not be unimpeachable and have sometimes landed the writers into errors. But most of the chroniclers of medieval India were official historians who wrote at the behest of the king or nobles or under their patronage. These writers had official records at their disposal. "There were no secrets in Mogul administration" says Vincent Smith,[32] and when even foreigners could consult official records,[33] Indian court and private historians certainly did. One wonders if there was any document in Akbar's archives (in the Imperial Capital, provincial capitals or chief cities) to which Abul Fazl was denied access. Similarly to Ziyauddin Barani was available Kabir-ud-din's *Fateh Namah* in which every day occurrences of Alauddin Khalji's reign were recorded. Such examples need not be multiplied. Official records were many; most of these have been lost by now, but they were easily available to medieval historians.

In conclusion it may be said that on a study of the medieval chronicles it appears that with regard to the figures of the casualties of the 'enemy' in war our chroniclers, probably to

29. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* (I, n. 3). Trs. in E and D, VII, p. 268.
30. *Deval Rani*, *op. cit.* (n. 28). p. 61; Afif, *op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 121.
Also see Rizqullah, *Waqiat in Mushtaqi* fols 38(b)-39(a) who mentions a case of collection of shoes of the enemy who lost their lives in action.
31. E.G. Barani, *op. cit.* (n. 11; pp. 67, 114, 229, 370. Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin* (Agra, 1938). pp. 199, 340, 341.
32. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul* (Delhi Reprint; 1962), p. 2.
33. *Loc. cit.*

glorify their heroes—conquerors and rulers—sometimes give inflated figures. Their estimates of the population of a city or region are also sometimes liable to be optimistic; their one major drawback is that they ignore the rural scene altogether. But in many other details, which are helpful in demographic study, they are fairly trustworthy. For instance, many chroniclers give reliable data about the prices of foodgrains and other commodities pertaining to their times. About the same period the amount of revenue, the rate of revenue, the price-schedules on which the revenue demand was settled, are also given. All this information helps in calculating the total amount of produce on which the then population subsisted and estimating, on the basis of per capita consumption of foodgrains and other edibles, the then density of population. Thus, in spite of their few weaknesses, the facts and figures supplied by medieval chroniclers are of great value in our study.

### Writings of Foreigners

So far as population studies about medieval India are concerned, the itineraries of foreign visitors to this country like travellers and traders are even more important. They have written about famines, pestilences and wars and about towns and cities thinly or thickly populated. They often compare Indian cities with those of their own countries. On a few occasions they give definite and fairly reliable population statistics. But their notices too are not free of weaknesses. Muslim travellers, coming from countries of small population densities, are invariably impressed with the teeming millions in India and, therefore, sometimes give exaggerated estimates of Indian population. The Europeans are more sober. But in fixing the proportion of Muslim numbers in the overall population structure, the testimony of European writers has to be accepted with great caution. Many of them were either not capable or not careful about distinguishing between peoples of various religious faiths. Vasco da Gama had landed near Calicut on 17 May, 1498. But even after spending three months in Calicut in a Hindu country, he was hardly aware of the existence of the Hindu Religion or Hindu Society, and 'he mistook a Hindu temple for a chapel'[34]... entered the temple and prayed there. As Denison Ross pertinently

34. R.P. Rao, *Portuguese Rule in Goa*, (Bombay, 1963), pp. 24-25.

remarks, "It remains a mystery why they (the Portuguese) failed to discover that the Zamorin was neither Christian nor Muslim, seeing that they were for so long in daily intercourse with him."[35]

Even in northern India, where Muslims were in good numbers, there is great doubt if Europeans could always distinguish a Hindu from a Muslim. Just as to Indians, all Europeans of various nationalities look alike, similarly many Europeans in all probability could not always differentiate between a Hindu and a Muslim in medieval times. After all the majority of Muslims were Hindu converts and their physiognomy did not change with conversion to Islam. Besides, Hindus and Muslims usually dressed alike. As early as the tenth century Ibn Hauqal was struck by the fact that "the Muslims and infidels in this tract (Kambaya to Saimur) wear the same dresses, and let their beards grow in the same fashion. They use fine muslin garments on account of the extreme heat. The men of Multan dress in the same way."[36] While it can only be assumed that the high classes of both the communities in the Sultanate period dressed alike, they are actually found to be doing so in the Mughal period. Hindu converts to Islam, especially of the lower classes, did not change their way of dressing with change of faith. That Hindus and Muslims looked alike is also proved by the fact that many rulers of the Sultanate and Mughal times enforced regulations requiring Hindus to wear distinguishing marks on their dresses so that they might not be mistaken for Muslims.[37] Qazvini says that Shahjahan had ordered that Hindus be not allowed to dress like Muslims.[38] The *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri* also recommended that the Hindus should not be allowed to look like Muslims.[39]

Many local officers also issued similar orders in their assignments.[40] But all these regulations could not have been strictly

35. *Cambridge History of India*, Ed. H.H. Dodwell, V (Delhi Reprint, 1963), p. 5.
36. Ibn Hauqal, *Ashkalal-ul-Bilad*, trs. E and D, *op. cit.* (1, n. 2) I, p. 39.
37. Sri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962), p. 5.
38. Qazvini, *Badshahnamah*, p. 445, cited in Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
39. *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, Urdu trs. (Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow). III, pp. 442-45.
40. Husain Khan, Jagirdar of Patiali and Shamsabad, had ordered that the Hindus of his jagir should wear a piece of cloth on their dress as a mark of distinction from the Muslims. Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (Calcutta, 1868-69), II, p. 223.

enforced. The paintings of the Mughal period as well as those of the Rajput and Pahari *qalam* clearly point to similar dresses for the Hindu and Muslim elite. Manucci says that many Rajputs wore gold armlets, "so that, if killed, those finding the body may see to its cremation."[41] Otherwise, except that the Rajputs usually shaved, all put on a 'cabaya' (qaba) and more or less looked alike.[42] Of course, the Indians themselves could not have mistaken a Hindu for a Muslim and *vice versa*. But it would have been difficult for a foreigner to distinguish between the two unless his stay in the country was of long duration and his curiosity and interest very keen. But, as we shall see later on, even keen observers like Pires and Bernier make mistakes in estimating the proportion of Muslim numbers. Sartorial patterns are determined more by court etiquette, current fashions, and climatic conditions, than by mere religious affiliations, and the mistake of the Europeans was unconscious. But in many cases, and because of this difficulty, the accounts of these foreigners are not quite helpful in fixing the ratio between the Hindus and Muslims in the population of Medieval India.

Else, the notices of Europeans are very informative. Coming from abroad, they were curious to know, and their observations are often more informative and reliable than those of indigenous writers.

### Modern Works

In modern works, the monumental work of Kingsley Devis on the population of India and Pakistan gives very reliable estimates. Edward Thornton and W. H. Moreland have added to our knowledge, the former by collecting a plethora of reliable data about the total population and Hindu-Muslim ratio in cities, districts and regions, and the latter by doing valuable pioneering work in the field of medieval Indian demography. But from Thornton's Gazetteer itself it is evident how sometimes contemporary writers and even surveyors could make mistakes in counting. There may not be many such instances, but one is indeed staggering. Writing about the city of Thatta in Sindh, Thornton says:

41. Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, English trs by W. Irvine, 4 vols., (London, 1906), II, p. 437.
42. *Ibid*., II, pp 122-23.

"The present population is variously estimated—at below 2,000 (Kennedy, I, 81), at less than 10,000 (Burnes, *Report on Commerce of Thatta*, 8), at 12,000 (Outram, 18), 15,000 (Burnes, *Bokhara*, III, 30,227), 18,000 (J.R.A.S., 1834, 234), 20,000 (Pottinger, 352), and 40,000 (James Burnes, *Sinde*)".[43] About Moreland's estimate Carr Saunders in *World Population* has commented thus: "Moreland's figure has been quoted with favour in the census reports of India, no better estimate is available, but its factual basis is of the most slender kind".[44] Even so, modern works on population studies are results of patient scientific research and are very valuable.

The Indian Census Reports are authentic and provide a detailed analysis of population trends from 1881 onwards. The demographic patterns marked out by them help in guaging the situation prior to 1881 and indeed for the medieval times. But these reports have only a limited value for us. If it were not so, our task would have become very easy. On the basis of the known statistics, say of the Muslim population between 1881 and 1941, we could have calculated regressively to find the Muslim numbers in the year 1781, 1681, 1581, 1500, 1400 or, for that matter, for any single year in the medieval period. But when this was done on the electronic computer, the results obtained were fantastic. (Calculation in regression on the electronic computer showed that 94 million Muslims of 1941 or 49 million of 1881, would have been 510 in A.D. 1401 and only 10 in A.D. 1241—an absolutely wrong result.) Moreover, Indian census figures have not always been unimpeachably reliable. Uneducated and even educated but superstitious parents have sometimes been found reluctant to truly disclose the number of their children as a protection against the 'evil eye of the jealous'. In the 1941 census population figures were inflated on account of communal rivalry; and the Pakistan census report of 1951 estimates that the inflation of Muhammadans in 1941 was of the order of 10 per cent.

## Conclusions

It is thus clear that contemporary and later source materials, which are the bases of our study, are far from being 'perfect' for

43. Thornton's Gazetteer, *op. cit.* (I, n. 7), IV, pp. 663-64.
44. Cited by J. M. Datta in "A Re-examination of Moreland's Estimate...at the Death of Akbar", *op. cit.*, (I, n. 10), p. 165.

research on medieval Indian demography. But while direct information on medieval population is not available, some facts and data left by contemporary chroniclers have a direct bearing on our area of study. Some information can also be gleaned from the references of foreign visitors, mostly travellers and traders, especially about cities and regions thickly or sparsely populated. But contemporary writers themselves might have made mistakes about their figures, and the validity of our conclusions based on their evidence may be open to question. Our data, assumptions, and conclusions, therefore, cannot be unquestionably correct. We can only estimate possibilities and seek limits within which truth may lie.[45]

# PART 2

# Total Population in Medieval India

# III

## TOTAL POPULATION—PRE-1000 POSITION

Let us start with the demographic position of India prior to the year A. D. 1,000. Although no data as such are available for the ancient times, there are statements of Greek writers which depict India as a country of large population. Apollodorus writes that there were between Hydaspes (Jhelum) and Hyphasis (Beas)—approximately the kingdom of Porus—1500 cities, none of which was less than a *kos*, which, adds Elphinstone, 'with every allowance for exaggeration, supposes a most flourishing territory.'[1] The army of Porus, one of the several kings who ruled in the Punjab, is said to have had 200 elephants, 300 chariots, 4,000 cavalry and 30,000 infantry.[2] This was the position in the western Punjab. In the East, Patliputra was eight miles long and one and a half broad and had 64 gates. The army of Chandragupta Maurya in camp, according to Magasthenes, was four hundred thousand and its total strength seven hundred thousand.

Since a detailed study of ancient Indian demography is out of the purview of the present study, it may be stated that on the basis of a careful examination of the evidence available on the subject, Dr. Pran Nath estimates the population of India around 300 B.C. as between 100 and 140 million.[3] This figure might appear to be

1. Apollodorous in Strabo, cited in Elphinstone, *op. cit.*, (I, n 6), p. 460.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 458. Elphinstone considers these figures to be too high.
3. Pran Nath, *Study in the Economic Condition of Ancient India*, Royal Asiatic Society (London, 1929), Chapter V.

on the high side[4]. But Professor Kingsley Davis, who has made a thorough study of the population of India and Pakistan, agrees with the estimate of Pran Nath and adds that conditions in ancient India provided a good basis for a large population. What he says may be summarised thus.

Being near the centre of origin of Neolithic cultural traits (India received these earlier than most of Europe), India had thousands of years ago, the basis for a thickly settled population. The highly developed civilization of the Indus Valley people and the Aryans confirms this contention. The Harappa and Mohenjodaro excavations reveal that "as far back as the 3rd or 4th millennium B.C. and probably much earlier still, India was in possession of a highly developed civilization with large and populous cities, well built houses, temples and public buildings...and many other amenities. Both sites contain the ruins of five or six cities superimposed one on top of another, and disclose a well-developed artistic sense and business-like habits .....and a highly developed city life."[5] "The inhabitants of these cities lived largely no doubt by agriculture".[6]

The Aryans came from the north-west around 2,000 B.C. They were an agricultural and pastoral people who understood the principles of irrigation and manuring and used the animal-drawn plough. They exhibited a marked division of labour based on caste and birth (*varna*) and also on economic and occupational diversification, differentiating wood workers, metal workers, leather workers, weavers, soldiers, and priests.

"So in India some three to seven thousand years ago there were peoples possessing a technology sufficiently advanced to support

4. More so when Colin Clark believes that the population of India (and Pakistan) was 70 million in A.D. 14. His estimates of poulation up to A.D. 1,000 which, as will be seen presently are certainly low, are as follows :

| | |
|---|---|
| A. D. 14 | 70 million |
| 35 | 75 " |
| 600 | 75 " |
| 800 | 75 " |
| 1,000 | 70 " |

Colin, Clark, *Population Growth and Land Use*, (Macmillan, New York, 1967), p. 64, Table.

5. Kingsley Davis, *op. cit*, (I, n. 9), p. 23.

6. *Ibid*, p. 23.

a dense population; and they encountered in the soil of India favourable conditions for the application of this technology."[7] Contemporary accounts of the times bear out the belief that the country was well peopled in a remote age. Although the *Rig Veda* talks of small villages only, the Brahmana literature, around 800-600 B.C., reveals that some of the villages had grown into towns and capitals with an urban mode of life. The caste system was crystallizing and the division of labour becoming more and more complex. Rice and other crops were being harvested, almost on a large scale. "The plough was large and heavy: we hear of as many as twenty-four oxen being harnessed to one..."[8]

"The Buddhist literature indicates that between the 7th and 4th centuries B.C. the economy of nothern India was comparable to that of the later middle ages in Europe."[9] Crafts and commerce were flourishing, and were highly organised. Money and credit were everyday instruments. The ordinary town seemed to embrace anywhere from 30 to 1,000 families, and approximately 20 cities existed in northern India alone. One tribal area, that of the Sakiyans, is supposed to have contained half a million people. Sea commerce extended to places as far away as Babylon.[10] At the time of Alexander's invasion (327-26 B.C.), the population seems to have been really large. One small kingdom (of Glaucanica or Glausae) was said to have 37 towns of over 5,000 inhabitants each".[11] Later, India's first real empire under the sway of Chandragupta Maurya (c. 321-297 B. C.) left records indicating a standing army of approximately 700,000 men, the maintenance of which must have required a substantial population. His engagement with Selucus and defeat of Selucus shows how vast his resources and strong his army and administration were. The administrative set up of Patliputra alone indicates a large and thickly populated and urbanized capital. "Under Ashoka (c. 274-236 B.C.) this empire achieved one of the highest points of Indian civilization, based on efficient administration, the use of written commands, abundant commerce,

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24
8. *Cambridge History of India* (hereafter C.H.I.), I, (Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 118, also pp. 130, 135-37.
9. Davis, *op. cit.*, (I, n. 9), p. 24.
10. C.H.I., I, *op. cit.*, (n. 8), pp. 175-6, 200-201, 212, 219.
11. Elphinstone, *op. cit.*, (I, n. 6), pp. 458-59 n, writing on the authority of Arrian.

extensive agriculture, and the use of metals."[12]

"So putting the evidence from archaeology, literature, and history together, we reach the conclusion that before the Christian era India had a substantial population, first because of its advanced technology and second because of the fertile environment of the application of this technology."[13] Though great sections remained sparsely settled, some of the plains must have had a dense population.

To resume, Dr. Pran Nath thinks that the population of India around 300 B.C. was 100 to 140 million. The next estimate that we have is by W. H. Moreland for the year A.D. 1600. According to him the population of India in 1600 was a hundred million.[14] Between these two dates, covering a period of about 2,000 years, we are almost in the dark about the demographic position of our country.

Dr. Nath believes "that the population of the country as a whole did not greatly vary between the early Hindu period and the first advent of Muhammadans, and it may be supposed to have lain roughly between the above limit (100—140 million)."[15] Strangely enough the estimates of Colin Clark also suggest more or less a stationary population for more than 1,300 years (although for a later, period, between A.D. 35 and 1340).[16] If these estimates are accepted we have to admit that right from 300 B.C. to A.D. 1600, for full 1,900 years (or almost two thousand years), the demographic picture hardly registered any charge. Such a situation is remarkable only if it is true. There are, no doubt, certain features of ancient India's social and economic life which hint at the country's having a stationary population. A stationary population tends to make society traditional and even static, and the ancient Indian society has almost earned a name for being traditional. But the more important fact is that a rising population necessitates changes in production techniques and invention of more effective tools of pro-

12. Davis, *op. cit.*, (I, n 9), p. 24.
13 *Ibid*, p 24.
14. Moreland, *op. cit.*, (I, n. 8), p 22.
15 Pran Nath. *op. cit.* (n. 3) p. 122.
Davis, *op. cit.*, (I, n. 9), p. 24.
16. According to Clark *op. cit.*, (n. 4), p. 64, the population of India in A.D. 35 was 75 million, and continued to remain so till 1340 A.D.

duction. But the implements of agricultural production, like the wooden plough with metal point, the toothed harrow, the sowing drill, pick and hoe, the smoothing board, the levelling beam, mattocks, spades and rakes and various contrivances for raising water did not substantially change in the ancient period. Nor did the production technique register any substantial alteration. Obviously the produce sufficed for a stationary population, and there being no need for increased production, there was no attempt made to improve agricultural implements.

But this analysis contains many fallacies. To us ancient society might look traditional or static as "when we pass a much slow-moving auto on the road... it seems to be standing still."[17] Social change in ancient times was no doubt slow, and yet ancient Indian society was not so static or traditional after all. For the implements of agricultural production have remained the same right up to our own times, but the population has gone on increasing so as to touch the 500 million mark now. Therefore, the points referred to above, while needing our attention, should not lead us to believe that the population remained stationary for two thousand years after 300 B.C. There is no evidence to show that the conditions discussed earlier, conducive to the growth of population, had ceased to exist after 300 B.C. There were invasions of the Sakas, Scythians and Hunas no doubt, and the cruel deeds of Mihirikula were long remembered, but the absorption of the conquering hordes in the country's population should not have vitally affected the demographic position. Besides, any loss would have been made up in a few centuries if not decades. Thus, in spite of some periods of decline, the population did naturally grow.

Fa-hien in the fifth century and Hieuen Tsang in the seventh seem to have been impressed with India's population. Fa-hien travelled in the Gupta Empire from A.D. 405 to 411, and stayed at Patliputra for a year and a half. He speaks of Magadh as a prosperous region with large towns and wealthy population. Between the Indus and Mathura he saw many monasteries. In Mathura alone there were 20 monasteries with 3,000 monks. Hieuen Tsang travelled the whole of India between A.D. 630 and 644. He says that Purshapura (Peshawar) and Taxila were almost in ruins

17. Wilbert E. Moore, *Social Change*, Prentice Hall, India (New Delhi, 1965), p. 1.

because of the atrocities of Mihirikula. But the crowds of pilgrims at Prayag impressed him greatly. 'He saw about 5000 monasteries and these contained about 200,000 monks "Both Fa-hien and Hicuen Tsang refer to a large number of towns and the latter gives their area as 20, 30, or 40 *li* in circuit, one *li* being about one-sixth of an English mile "[18]

Similarly, the evidence of the Arab geographers shows that India was a thickly populated country in the ninth and tenth centuries. Al Masudi, writing about A.D. 941-42, speaks of Kanauj as a very great kingdom. It had four armies. "Each of them numbers 700,000 to 900,000 men",[19] and is assigned to repulse an attack in any of the four directions. About Multan Masudi says, "it is one of the strongest frontier places of the Musalmans, and around it there are one hundred and twenty thousand towns and villages".[20] Ibn Hauqal, who finished his work in A.D. 976, also calls Multan a city with a strong fort, "but Mansura is more fertile and prosperous".[21] Debal "is a large mart, and the port not only of this but neighbouring regions".[22] These geographers were interested only in Islamic countries, and stopped their narratives when they 'reached the extreme eastern border of the dominions of Islam',[23] namely Sind, where Muslims ruled, and Gujarat, with which they had commercial intercourse. Even so, their general impression was that India was a large and populous country.

Another fact which should not be lost sight of is that from the time of Ashoka, Buddhist missionaries used to go abroad, and with time their number would have become commensurate with their influence as "both Buddhist and Brahmanical religions were widely prevalent in several countries of western Asia before the advent of Islam".[24] Between the second and fifth centuries A.D. Indian colonial kingdoms were established in the Malay Peninsula, Cambodia, Annam and the islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali and Borneo.

18. *The Classical Age*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Second impression, (Bombay, 1962), p. 583 n. 1.
19. *Muruj-ul-Zuhab, op. cit.*, (II, n. 1), p. 23.
20. *Ibid*, p. 20. Also Idrisi, *Nuzhat-ul-Mushtoq*, trs. in E and D, I, p. 82.
21. *Ashkal-ul-Bilad, op. cit.*, (II, n. 36), p. 36.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
23. *Ibid*, p. 40.
24. R. C. Majumdar, C. Raychaudhuri and K. K. Datta, *An Advanced History of India*, Macmillan & Co. (London, 1958), p. 212.

In all these places Hindu manners and customs became widely prevalent. This shows that the number of Indians who migrated to them was large. Shrivijaya, Shailendra and Chola rule was established in South-East Asia from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Al Masudi talks of the 'innumerable armies of the Maharaja' of Zabag ('isles of the eastern sea'). In the Hindu kingdom of Kambuja, a Chinese author writes : "More than a thousand Brahmans from India reside there...(and) read their books day and night".[25] In the temples of Borobudur and Angkor Vat, 'the style of sculpture follows the classic models of Gupta India".[26] The causes of Indian cultural and colonial expansion in South-East Asia are not easy to assess, but Mysoreans, other South Indians, North Indians, Bengalis and many others went there.[27] The emigration was not due to any population pressure in India. But the migration of princes, soldiers, scholars, priests, sculptors etc., and that too in good numbers, indicates that India had a large population—enough and to spare.

Now the main problem is : what could be the population of India in A.D. 1000 ? This gives rise to another question : what were the territorial boundaries of India whose population we are going to estimate ? The India of A.D. 1000 was much bigger than what it (India and Pakistan) is today. The Hindu Shahiya kings ruled upto Hindu Kush mountains including Kabul and Lamghan and their coins used to be struck at Qandhar.[28] In the east the Kamrup country bordered on China.[29] According to some Arab geographers even Tibet (or at least a part of it) was included within the Indian frontiers.[30] The India of A.D. 1000 was thus a very vast country indeed. No wonder that Sulaiman the Merchant, who had visited India and China several times, writes (A.D. 851) that "the country of India is larger than that of China...Its rulers are also larger in number".[31]

25. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
26. D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, Macmillan & Co. (London, 1955), p. 43.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
28. Ibn Haugal, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 36), p. 35.
29. Al Idrisi, *op. cit.*, (n 20), p. 76.
30. Rashiduddin, on the authority of Alberuni, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 2), pp. 57, 63.
31. *Sulaiman Saudagar*, trs. from Arabic into Hindi by Munshi Mahesh Prasad, Nagri Pracharni Sabha (Kashi, sam. 1978, A.D. 1921), p. 83.

Jatindra Mohan Datta writes: "Ferishtah...states that the population of India at the beginning of the Muhammadah conquest was six hundred million (60 crors)".[32] I have not been able to locate this figure in Ferishtah's text, but the whole narrative of Ferishtah does give the impression that India, on the eve of Muslim conquest, was a very large and populous country.[33] Datta, however, rightly remarks that a population of 200 to 300 million would be a better estimate, and if 100 to 140 million is estimated for 300 B.C., a population of 200 million is certainly not a high figure for A.D. 1,000. J.M. Datta adds: "the population was very much greater (on the eve of Turkish invasions) than at the death of Akbar. During centuries of invasions, constant oppression and misrule, the wholesale massacres during the Pathan period, the population of India dwindled...This broad fact emerges from the two estimates (Ferishtah's and Moreland's), howsoever erroneous or full of fallacies the individual estimates may be."[34]

32. Jatindra Mohan Datta, "Proportion of Muhammadans in India Through Centuries", *Modern Review*, Calcutta, January, 1948, p. 32.
33. Ferishtah, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 6), I, pp. 17-28.
34. J. M. Datta, *op. cit.*, (n. 32), p. 32

# IV

## A. D. 1000-1200

Jatindra Mohan Datta's figure of two hundred million as the population of India around A.D. 1000 may be taken to be a reasonably correct estimate. But as the eleventh century dawned, a sudden and rapid demographic decline was registered. The first thirty years of the eleventh century in India were witness to the repeated invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni. During and after his campaigns, the population of the country declined rapidly. Mahmud's invasions alone meant to the country a loss of about two million people.[1]

The region of Mahmud's activity extended from Peshawar to Kanauj in the east and from Peshawar to Anhilwara in the south-west. So the loss of population was only in northern India. Many of the places that he attacked were deserted[2]. But dissemination of the Indian population due to foreign invasions had started even before Mahmud's time (especially during Muhammad bin Qasim's invasion of Sind[3] and Subuktagin's attacks), and was continued

1. See Appendix A—"Loss of Indian Population during Mahmud of Ghazni's Invasions."
2. Alberuni's *India*, trs. by Edward C. Sachau, 2 vols. (London, 1910), I, p. 22.
3. "According to Indian inscriptions, the territories overrun by the (Arab) invaders included Sind, Cutch, Surashtra or Kathiawar, Chavotaka (some Chapa principality of Gujarat or Western Rajputana), a Maurya principality apparently in southern Rajputana or Malwa, and the Gurjjara territory apparently round Binmal or Broach. The progress of the Arabs was stopped by the Chalukyas in the south, the Partiharas in the east, and the Kurkotas in the north".

thereafter. For instance from the *Tarikh-i-Subuktagin* of Baihaqi we learn about the attack on Banaras in A.D. 1033, only three years after Mahmud's death, by his successor Masud, resulting in great loss of life. "This year is also recorded by Indian historians", says Baihaqi. "as remarkable for a great drought and famine in many parts of the world, especially in Persia and India, in which entire provinces were depopulated."[4]

However, after the series of Ghaznavid expeditions there were no major invasions from abroad till almost the end of the twelfth century. But, in the meanwhile, Indian rulers were waging wars for political supremacy in India itself. Since the overlordship of the whole of this vast country was neither probably the aim of any single ruler nor even a remote possibility, their energies remained confined to provoking internal strife or attacking their neighbours, but in these futile exercises the country's population was certainly disseminated. Nevertheless, wars remained a common feature in the eleventh and twelfth centuries throughout the country.

In Madhya Desa (Upper Ganges Valley) the Kalachuri kings had made themselves masters of Allahabad, Banaras and the Southern Doab, and had pushed their conquests southwards as far as Kalinga But they were opposed by a hostile combination of the rulers of Gujarat, Malwa and the Deccan, losing in the process the control of Madhya Desa to the Gahadvalas. Govind Chandra, the Gahadvala prince (1104-1114) and ruler (1114-1154) successfully repulsed Turkish attacks on northern Avadh, Banaras and other Buddhist and Hindu holy places. But the rivalry of the Gahadvalas with the Chauhans, who had set up an empire in the west with seats at Delhi and Ajmer, came to an end only when Muhammad Ghori had destroyed the scions of both houses—Prithviraj Chouhan and Jaya Chandra (Jai Chand) at the close of the twelfth century.

In the east the Senas of Bengal were ousted by the Palas towards the close of the eleventh century. The Senas had come from Karnatika in the Deccan, and one of its warlike prince Vijaya Sen vanquished the king of Gaud, apparently of Pala lineage, and the neighbouring princes of North Bihar, Assam and Orissa. The last ruler of this dynasty, whose power was destroyed by Bakhtiyar

Majumdar and others, *An Advanced History of India, op. cit.*, (III, n. 24) p. 182.

4. Baihaqi *Tarikh-i-Subuktagin* trs in E and D, *op. cit.*, (I, n. 2) II, pp. 58-59.

Khalji at the end of the twelfth century, claimed to have pushed his conquests as far as the southern ocean, reduced Kamrup to subjection, and vanquished the king of Banaras.

In the central and western parts of the country, a similar situation prevailed. To the house of the Chandelas of Bundelkhand belonged Ganda (A.D. 999-1025) who had defied Mahmud Ghznavi for long but ultimately had to acknowledge the invader's overlordship. After Ganda's death the Chandelas and the Kalachuris of Chedi came into conflict, for both aspired to the overlordship of northern India. Gangeya Deva Kalachuri (1015-1040) pushed his conquests as far as Tirhut ; his son Karan Deva (1040-1070) waged wars against the rulers of Malwa and Magadh. Karan also gave a crushing defeat to the Chandela king Kirtivarman Deva (1049-1100). But the defeat was soon retrieved. Henceforward the history of the Chandelas is a history of conflicts with their neighbours. Wars against Gujarat were successful, but when the Chandela rulers plunged into a prolonged and bitter struggle with the Chauhans of Delhi, they were completely crushed by Prithvi Raj in 1182-83. They ceased to be a political power when Qutbuddin Aibak advanced against Kalinjar in 1202. The Kalachuris of Chedi became subject to the same process of decadence. The Parmar ruler Bhoj of Malwa who came to the throne in A.D. 1010 waged successful wars against Gujarat, Chedi and Karnatik. But the latter avenged their defeat about the time of his death in 1053-54. Kumarapala, the Solanki king of Gujarat (1142-73), similarly fought against the Chauhan Raja of Ajmer and the king of Malwa who had come to the latter's aid. He also established his suzeraignty in Konkan.

In the South, warlike activities were as common as in the North. From 973 to 1190 Karnataka was dominated by the Chalukyas, and the Chalukyas were engaged in bitter feuds with the Paramaras of Malwa and the Cholas of Tanjore (early eleventh century). The Cholas under Rajaraja I and his famous son, Rajendra Chola I, conquered nearly the whole of the Tamil Nadu region. His general marched as far as the Ganges and Rajendra Chola himself inflicted a defeat on Mahipal I of Bengal as well as the Chalukya king of the Deccan.

This brief picture of a warring India, was surely detrimental to population growth. Alberuni's work "scarcely reminds the r-

of the incessant wars...during which it had been prepared."[5] Nevertheless, he is almost moved by the atmosphere around him, and his picture of India cannot be called encouraging from the demographic point of view.

Alberuni makes mention of a number of cities and towns; although he does not attempt an estimate of their population.[6] At this time Delhi seems to have been an obscure town, it was not considered worthy of mention in the works of Utbi and Alberuni in connection with Mahmud Ghaznavi's campaigns.[7] Kanauj, writes he, was "a very large place", but "most of it is now in ruins and desolate".[8] He thus confirms the statement of Al Masudi, quoted earlier, that at one time Kanauj was very populous and prosperous, but he knew of its destruction in 1018-19; hence the remark. Bhilsan (Bhilsa, Vidisha) he calls "a place most famous among the Hindus."[9] Although such stray notices do not help much in our study, yet the work of Alberuni does give the impression that India, a vast country with a great civilization, was on the path of demographic decline.

Al Idrisi wrote a little more than a hundred years after Alberuni about the middle of the twelfth century, mainly about Sind and the West Coast. He gives an impression of demographic recovery. He calls Debul a "populous place, (and) ..Ships laden with the productions of Uman, and the vessels of China and India come to Debul."[10] "Mansura occupies a space of a mile square, (but it) is great, populous, rich, and commercial...The bazars are filled with people, and well stocked with goods."[11] The Meds, living between Hind and Sind "are numerous"[12] Alor "is a pleasant place, and worthy of comparison with Multan as regards size"... Kalari...is a pretty town, well fortified, and is a busy trading place. "Sharusan (Sadusan) is remarkable for its size...It is much

5. Sachau in Alberuni, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. xxiii.
6. *Ibid.*, I, pp 196-212.
7. It "was probably founded by a Tomar chieftain about the middle of the eleventh century".
   *Advanced History of India, op. cit.* (III, n. 24), p 186.
8. Alberuni, I, p. 199.
9. *Ibid*, p. 202.
10. *Nuzhat-ul-Mushtaq. op. cit.* (III, n. 20), p. 77.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
12. *Ibid.*, 79.

resorted to...Firabuz is a town of which the inhabitants are rich... Kirusi is nearly as large as Multan...Armail is nearly as large as Firabuz. It is well peopled...The inhabitants are rich...Darak is a populous trading town...Fardan is a commercial town the environs of which are well populated." Similar are the notices about Multan, Jandur (Jand-rud). and Sandur. "Masurjan is a well peopled commercial town."[13]

"The towns of India (as separate from Sind) are very numerous" says Idrisi. Kambaya is well known as a naval station; Subara is a populous, busy town; Sindan is populous and large and has an extensive commerce both in exports and imports. Broach and Asawal (old name for Ahmedabad) are well populated. The list of Al Idrisi is long[14] and includes remarks about as far-off regions as Malwa and Banaras. He even talks of Kanauj as a strong and prosperous kingdom,[15] which indicates its rehabilitation after the devastating attack of Mahmud.[16] Some sort of recovery is also discernible in the rebuilding of a few temples destroyed by Mahmud and construction of new ones by Indian rulers.[17]

But a little reflection would help realise that in spite of the notices of Al Idrisi, Indian population did show a decline during this period. Idrisi mostly talks of port-towns and cities in Sind. This Sind was under Muslim rule. Khwaja Masud bin Sad bin Salman, a poet contemporary of Sultan Ibrahim Ghaznavi, also loved his Lahore, now a Muslim city in the Ghaznavid empire. These Muslim writers were right in their own way of thinking and feeling. The population of Punjab and Sind impressed them; in its important towns there were now many Muslim inhabitants, and they felt jubilant at the extension of Islam into India. They, naturally, did not care to note that immigration of a few Muslims from abroad would have been neutralized by the emigration of Indians to South-East Asia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, that conversions to Islam did not mean addition to population, and that both Punjab and Sind had larger number of inhabitants in pre-Mahmud days.

Evidence for the decline of population in the eleventh and twelfth

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-84.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-93.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.
16. Alberuni, *op. cit.* (n. 2), I, p. 199.
17. Thornton's *Gazetteer*, *op. cit.* (I, n.7). see under Abu.

centuries is quite strong. Firstly, Mahmud Ghaznavi's invasions had resulted in loss of Indian population and the reeession of Indian territorial boundaries. Kabul and Lamghan had been taken by Subuktagin, and under Mahmud the western Punjab up to Lahore at least had beсn annexed to the Ghaznavid empire. Khwaja Salman gives the boundaries of this empire thus : "Its length extends from Lahore to the Euphrates, and its breadth from Kashmir to the borders of Sistan".[18] Governors of the Punjab like Ariyaruk, Niyaltigin etc. were now appointed by Ghazni. Naturally, the portion of the Punjab annexed to the Ghaznavid empire had been written off as lost to India by the Indian rulers, and it does not figure in their struggle for their supremacy in the country.[19] Recession of frontiers meant a smaller India with a smaller population.

Secondly, from Punjab, now a 'foreign' land, attaeks on Indian rulers were launched off and on, again resulting in loss of population. Mahmud had appointed officers in the Punjab "whose sole aim was to wage wars against the Rais."[20] Even after the Ghaznavid empire had declined and Mahmud's deseendants had shifted to Lahore, Ghaznavid eommanders and rulers continued to raid Indian towns and eities.

Above all, Hindu rulers were eonstantly fighting against one another throughout this period and in all parts of the country. Their wars would have caused population deeline. All these facts clearly indicate a demographic decline during these two centuries. The population of India in A.D. 1000 has been estimated at 200 million. The population of the 'shrunken' India in 1200 may not have been more than 150 million.

18 *Diwan-i-Salman*, E and D *op. cit.* (I, n. 2), IV, p. 518.

19. Lost in the first quarter of the eleventh century, Western Punjab was regained for India by Iltutmish after defeating Yaldoz in 1217. C.H.I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25), p. 52.

20. M. Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin* (Delhi Reprint, 1951), p. 95.

# V

## A. D. 1200-1400

At the dawn of the thirteenth century, Turkish rule was established in northern India. Within fifteen years of Muhammad Ghori's occupation of Delhi, the Turks rapidly conquered most of the major cities of northern India. Their lightening success, as described by contemporary chroniclers, entailed great loss of life. Qutbuddin Aibak's conquests during the life-time of his master and later on in the capacity of king (c. 1200-1210) included Gwalior, parts of Bundelkhand, Ajmer, Ranthambhor, Anhilwara, as well as parts of U.P. and Malwa. In Nahrwala alone 50,000 persons were killed during Aibak's campaign.[1] No wonder that besides earning the honorific of Lakhbakhsh (giver of lakhs), he also earned the nickname of killer of lacs.[2] Bakhtiyar Khalji marched through Bihar into Bengal and massacred people in both the regions. During his expedition to Gwalior Iltutmish (1210-36) massacred 700 persons besides those killed in the battle on both sides. His attacks on Malwa (Vidisha and Ujjain) were met with stiff resistance and were accompanied by great loss of life. He is also credited with killing 12,000 Khokhars (Gakkhars) during Aibak's reign.[3] The successors of Iltutmish (Raziyah, Bahram etc.,) too fought and killed zealously.

1. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6) I, p. 62.
2. Minhaj Siraj, *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, Bib. Ind. (Calcutta, 1864), p. 138. Also A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad, 1961), p. 91.
   Since most of the facts and figures for the period upto 1260 are from the *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, references would be given only sparingly to avoid cluttering up the narrative.
3. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6) I, p. 65.

During the reigns of Nasiruddin and Balban (1246-86) warfare for consolidation and expansion of Turkish dominions went on apace. Trailokyavarman, who ruled over Southern U.P., Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand, and is called 'Dalaki va Malaki' by Persian chroniclers. was defeated after great slaughter (1248). In 1251, Gwalior, Chanderi, Narwar and Malwa were attacked. The Raja of Malwa alone had 5,000 cavalry and 200,000 infantry and would have been defeated only after great loss of life. The inhabitants of Kaithal were given such severe punishment (1254) that they 'might not forget (the lesson) for the rest of their lives'. In 1256 Ulugh Khan Balban carried on devastating warfare in Saimur, and 'so many of the rebellious Hindus were killed that numbers cannot be computed or described'. Ranthambhor was attacked in 1259 and 'many of its valiant fighting men were sent to hell'. In the punitive expedition to Mewat (1260) 'numberless Hindus perished under the merciless swords of the soldiers of Islam'. In the same year 12,000 men, women and children were put to the sword in Hariyana.

As a minister Balban was not soft-hearted. When he became the Sultan, he followed the policy of blood and iron, which means that his killings became even more sanguinary. His sphere of operations was, however, confined to the Ganga-Jumna Doab and Avadh, Katehar and Mewat. In Katehar large sections of the male population were massacred and, according to Barani, in villages and jungles heaps of human corpses were left rotting. During his expedition to Bengal, 'on either side of the principal bazar (of Lakhnauti) in a street two miles in length, a row of stakes was set up and the adherents of Tughril were impaled upon them'.

Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughlaq (c. 1296-1350) were great warriors and killers. Alauddin's conquest of Gujarat (1299) and the massacres by his generals in Anhilwara, Cambay, Asavalli, Vanmanthali etc., earned him, according to the *Rasmala*, the nickname of Khuni. His contemporary chronicler proclaims that Alauddin shed more blood than the Pharaohs did[4]. He captured Ranthambhor after very heavy casualties[5]. Chittor's capture was followed by a massacre of 30,000 people, after Jauhar had been

4. Barani, *op. cit* (II, n. 11) pp. 251-52. Isami, *op. cit.* (II, n. 31) p. 243

5 For detailed references see K.S. Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, 2nd Ed. (Bombay, 1967) pp. 69-71.

5 For detailed references see *Ibid*, p. 94.

performed and the Rajputs had died fighting in large numbers. When Malwa was attacked (1305), its Raja is said to have possessed 40,000 horse and 100,000 foot[6]. After the battle, 'so far as human eye could see, the ground was muddy with blood.' Many cities of Malwa like Mandu, Ujjain, Dharanagri and Chanderi were captured after great resistance. The capitulation of Sevana and Jalor (1308,1311) were accompanied by massacres after years of prolonged warfare. In Alauddin's wars in the South, similar killings took place, especially in Dwarsamudra and Maabar. In the latter campaign Malik Kafur went from plce to place, and to some places many times over, and in his rage at not finding the fleeing prince Vira Pandya, he killed the people mercilessly[7]. His successor Mubarak Khalji once again sacked Gujarat and Devagiri.

Under Muhammad Tughlaq, wars and rebellions knew no end. Even an enhancement of land-tax ended in massacres in the Doab. Many more perished on the way when the capital was shifted to Daulatabad. His Qarachal expedition cost him a whole army. His expeditions to Bengal, Sind and the Deccan, as well as ruthless suppression of twentytwo rebellions, meant only depopulation[8]. From all accounts it is certain that in the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century the loss of population was immense. For one thing, in spite of constant efforts no addition of territory could be made by Turkish rulers from 1210 to 1296, for another while the weapons of the Turkish period were not as sophisticated as those of the Mughal, the Turkish rulers were more ruthless in war and less merciful towards rebels, with the result their killings were heavy. Hence the extirpating campaigns of Balban, and the repeated attacks on regions already devastated but not completely subjugated. Bengal was attacked by Bakhtiyar, by Balban, by Alauddin, and by all the three Tughlaqs—Ghayas, Muhammad and Firoz. Malwa and Gujarat were repeatedly attacked and sacked. Almost every Muslim ruler invaded Ranthambhor until it was subjugated by Alauddin Khalji (1301, again temporarily). Gwalior, Katehar and Avadh regions were also repeatedly attacked. Rajputana, Sind and Punjab (also because of the Mongol invasions), knew no peace. In the first decade of the

6. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 252-53.
8. Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty* (Calcutta, 1963), pp. 195-257.

fourteenth century Turkish invaders penetrated into the South, carrying death and destruction. When the sultans of Delhi lost their hold on the South, Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms came to grips with each other. The wars between these two kingdoms generally ended in massacres. Only one instance should suffice to give an idea of this. Mulla Daud of Bidar vividly describes the fighting between Muhammad Shah Bahmani and the Vijayanagar king in 1366 in which "Ferishtah computes the victims on the Hindu side alone as numbering no less than half a million".[9] According to Ferishtah, Muhammad "So wasted the districts of Carnatic that for several decades they did not recover their natural population."[10]

Moreover, the Rajput chiefs who fought against the Turks, also never ceased fighting among themselves. Their love of war needs no detailed recapitulation. The Turks themselves were not a united people. Iltutmish had to give bitter fight to the Jandars for getting the throne. His campaigns against Yaldoz and Qubaicha were not bloodless. Under him and Raziyah, Shias and Sunnis fought and were killed in thousands even in the mosques and streets of Delhi, and she lost the throne because of Muslim armed opposition. Jalaluddin Khalji ascended the throne after destroying the Ilbaris, and Alauddin also waded through blood to the throne.[11]

Add to this the demographic loss occasioned by the recurring Mongol invasions directed from Central Asia or Persia for almost a whole century. The Mongols had sacked and burnt Lahore in A.D. 1241, and they continued to occupy major portions of Punjab and Sind right up to the end of the thirteenth century. Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) repulsed their attacks with great losses on both sides. Nevertheless, right up to the invasion of Tarmashirin (1325-29), thousands and thousands of Indians used to be killed in repelling their attacks.

All these factors contributed towards irreparable shrinkage of Indian population. Nor should the ravages of famine on population be ignored. Throughout the medieval times, droughts, pestilences and famines were a common feature of Indian economic life. During

9. Sewell, *op. cit.* (II, n. 21), pp 30-31.
10. Ferishtah *op. cit.* (It, n. 6) I, p 295.
Also Sewell, p. 38.
11. Minhaj, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 170.

this period too famines claimed their toll of victims. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries famines continued to occur off and on. Besides wars which brought famines and pestilences in their wake, drought, inundation, failure of crops, devastation of rural areas, and consequent loss of labour for fields, locusts and similar other causes were also responsible for scarcity. But the chief determinant of good crop was rainfall; and rainfall in India has never been regular. Hence there were intermittent occurrences of famines.

Jamili, the author of *Siyar-ul-Arifin* writes about a famine in the time of Iltutmish (A.D. 1210-1236) in which many people in the capital city of Delhi itself died of starvation. The loss of life in the countryside too must have been great, but little is known about it. Ziyauddin Barani and Isami record a famine in 1291 which continued to rage for two years. During these years rainfall was so scanty in the region between Siwalik and Delhi that crops failed completely. A large number of people lay dead in the streets of Delhi every day and no remedial measures were any avail.[12] The peasants of Siwalik, "where not a drop of rain fell", flocked to Delhi to seek relief. But the acute scarcity in Delhi itself compelled them to decide on mass suicide. Both the writers say that everyday, in batches of twenty or thirty they drowned themselves in the Jumma.[13] A few years later Alauddin resorted to rationing in Delhi in seasons of drought;[14] but he could do little about the rural areas where periodic visitations of this calamity would have carried away large numbers.[15] During the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq Delhi, its environs, and the area of the Ganga-Jumna Doab were struck by "the most severe famine of which we have any records in India."[16] According to Wolseley Haig it continued to rage for seven years, but "there is no doubt that famine lasted from 727 till 741 A.H. (A.D. 1326-27 to 1340) with slight interruptions and its

12. Isami, *op. cit.* (II, n. 31), pp. 212-213.
Barani, *op. cit.* (II n. 11), p. 212.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Barani p. 309, Ferishtah *op. cit.* (II n. 6), I, p. 112; Lal, *Khaljis, op. cit.* (n.4) p. 203.
15. Barani, pp. 308-09. Also Lal, *Khaljis*, p. 222.
16. C.H.I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25), p. 153. Also Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabqat-i-Akbari*. Bib. Ind. text, 3 vols. (Calcutta, 1927-35) I, p. 202. and Yahiya, *op. cit.* (II, n. 18), p. 107.

of immense wealth and riches.[29] Ibn Battuta calls it a very fine city. In the fifteenth century Nicolo Conti speaks of it as a place fourteen miles in circuit. The whole of Gujarat (often written as Cambay) remained a "great Kingdom"[30] thoughout, though it was sacked in the time of Alauddin. Thus, both these visitors were greatly impressed by the riches and population of the port towns on the west coast, and are corroborated by Wassaf whose description of Gujarat is still more impressive.[31]

Ibn Battuta was in India for six long years and moved about from Sind to Madura (and Ceylon) and in the east he went as far as Chittagaon and Kamrup. He visited about 75 cities, towns and ports,[32] including Kanauj, Bahraich, Gwalior and Khajuraho. Basking under the favours of the king, he was carefree; being a globe trotter, he was optimistic. Therefore he has a good word for every place he visited. His impressions of south Indian port towns have been presently noticed. In North India he seems to have been impressed by every town, every city every region. According to him irrigation in the Indus valley was done on the pattern of the Nile valley, the overflow from the river being taken advantage of to irrigate the fields[33] To him Sivistan was 'a large city';[34] and Bukkar a 'handsome city'.[35] Ucheh was a 'big city' on the banks of the Indus with fine bazars and new buildings.[36] Abohar was "small, handsome and thickly populated".[37] Sarsuti was a "big city", and Hansi "one of the finest and perfectly built cities which is most thickly populated" [38] Chanderi and Maabar (Malabar) were among the most fertile regions of India.[39] So was Kara-Manikpur, "one of the most prosperous parts" of the country [40] In short, in the words of al-Qalqashindi, "In the whole

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 388-91
30. *Ibid.*, p 382.
31. *Tarikh-i-Wassaf* (Bombay, 1877), IV, p. 447.
32. Rizvi, *Tughlaq Kalin Bharat* (Aligarh, 1956), Pt.1., pp jklm.
33. Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I, n. 1), p. 1.
Also Al Istakhri, *Kitab-ul-Akalim*, E and D, I, p 30.
34. Ibn Battuta, p. 6.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
36. *Loc. cit.*
37. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
38. *Ibid*, p. 23.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

country towns are closely built".[41]

There was a good reason for foreign travellers to have been impressed with Indian cities. With the establishment of Turkish rule urbanization had received a fillip. Muslims are city-dwellers, and everywhere they have preferred to live in urban areas. In India, Muslim rulers and officers lived in important cities and carried on administration from there. Muslim immigrants also mostly stayed in the cities, they did not spread out in rural areas. In short Muslim rule helped in the rehabilitation of some old decaying cities and establishment new ones. As pointed out earlier, Delhi itself was an insignificant place right upto the eleventh century, but by the time of Ibn Battuta, "it was a magnificent place with strong and beautiful buildings. No city, Islamic or un-Islamic, was so great in the east as Delhi."[42] Daulatabad, the second capital, was equally impressive, and Ibn Battuta and Shihabuddin Ahmad speak about it in glowing terms.[43] Lahore probably still bore the scars of Mongol ravage and occupation, but Kanauj had completely recovered from the early eleventh century ravages.[44] According to al-Qalqashindi it had become 'the Cairo of India and the biggest place there."[45] Somnath too had borne the brunt of Mahmud's invasion, but was now once again a renowned centre of pilgrimage and a place of active trade according to Marco Polo,[46] who, ironically enough, visited it only four years before its (once again temporary) destruction by Alauddin Khalji's forces. A new important town was Bahraich which was visited by Ibn Battuta in the company of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq.

There is therefore no wonder if Ibn Battuta was impressed by India's towns and cities. However, he had not failed to notice those agencies of affliction which adversely affected the population of the country. Because of the shifting of the capital, he noted that Delhi, "the greatest city in the world had the fewest inhabitants."[47] In Sivistan he saw large number of skins of people flayed

41. *Subh-ul-Asha*, *op cit.* (II, n. 4), p. 18.
42. Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I, n. 1) pp. 24-26.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 41. Also E and D, III, p. 575, and al-Qalqashindi, *op. cit.* (II, n. 4), p. 30.
44. Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I, n. 1), p. 159.
45. al-Qalqashindi, p. 40.
46. *Ser Marco Polo*, *op. cit.* (n. 22), II, p. 389.
47. E and D, III, p. 585.

alive. He witnessed famines.[48] He came across deserted villages.[49] He witnessed the cruel executions by the king,[50] and saw Indian slaves being taken out of the country.[51] Why the mountains on the north-west are called 'Hindu Kush' (Hindu killer) is because thousands and thousands of Indian captives perished on them while being carried away out of the country. If Ibn Battuta does not specifically mention any demographic set-back, his narrative nevertheless contains indirect reference to it.

But knowledgeable people in India itself were aware of a demographic decline, so that by the time Muhammad bin Tughlaq died, it had become obvious that the population had greatly dwindled because of constant warfare, foreign invasions, famines and pestilence.[52] That is why when during Firoz Tughlaq's reign (A.D. 1351-88), no Mongol invaders crossed the Sindh,[53] and the sultan himself renounced the path of war and destruction, his contemporary chronicler Shams Siraj Afif, noticed a rise in population. He writes, "the subjects of the Sultanate increased to such an extent and there was such increase in population that in every *iqta* and *pargana*, a village was established (inhabited) at every four *kos*."[54] The Sultan's water-courses and canals gave the benefit of extended cultivation to hundred of miles. His bringing under cultivation waste or "dead" land, his clearings of old fields and new settlements lent a helping hand in demographic recovery.[55]

48. Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I n. 1), pp. 84-85, 117, 142-43, 164-65.
49. *Ibid*, 155-56.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 93, for example.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
52. How destructive to population can be the effect of a combination of intermittent warfare, foreign invasions, famine and pestilence, is brought home from the example of Srinagar in Kashmir in the nineteenth century. "Moorcroft, who visited the city in 1823, estimated the population at 240,000; the judicious and cautious Elphinstone (*Account of Caubul*, p 507), in the early part of the present [nineteenth] century, at '150,000 to 200,000'. By another authority (Von Hugel, II, p 258) the population of Srinagar was subsequently computed not to exceed 40,000. Vigne (II, p. 118), as well as Cunningham, estimate the population at 80,000. This appalling reduction of the population in so brief a period has been the combined effect of oppression, pestilence, and famine".
Thornton, *op. cit.* (I, n. 7), IV, pp. 540-541.
53. Afif, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), pp. 124-131.
54. *Ibid*, pp.264-65, 321.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Afif does not write about this rise of population in a casual way. He was so much impressed by the fact that he repeats his statement at another place, when the population seems to have grown still more. "In the reign of this monarch (Firoz Shah)", says he, "the population was greatly increased throughout the Doab, from the hill of Sakrudih and Kharla to Kol, not one village remained waste, even in name, nor one span of land uncultivated. In the Doab there were fifty-two parganas flourishing, and a similar (state of prosperity) prevailed.....in every fief (iqta) and district (shiqq). Thus in the district of Samana there were four prosperous villages within one *kos*..."[56] And these villages were not merely a collection of a few hutments; in each village there were two to three hundred inhabitants.[57]

It is refreshing to note that a medieval chronicler like Shams Siraj Afif does not only gloat over a rise of population, he seems to have known the principles of demographic rise also. During Firoz's reign major wars were few, but minor campaigns used to be mounted against Hindu Zamindars every now and then. However, minor losses in these campaigns used to be soon made up by the natural growth of population. The statement of Afif that "the inhabitants of Dar-ul-Harb were ruined and destroyed every year, (but) the destruction of the region was (soon) more than made up and the region repopulated..." only confirms the well-recognised principle that recovery from minor demographic setbacks is rather quick.[58]

On the basis of the evidence set forth above, it would be reasonable to conclude that at the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq's death (about the middle of the fourteenth century) the population may have come down to about 160 million; at the time of Firoz Tughlaq's death (A. D. 1388) the number was probably 170 million.

There is a basis for arriving at this conclusion. The total revenue of Firoz Tughlaq's empire was 67,500,000 tankahs. Since the revenue collected was, on the average, one third of the total produce, the total produce of food-grains in his dominions would have been

56. *Ibid.*, p. 293. Also trs. in E and D, III, p. 345.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 180 says "*ahl dar harb ra harsal nitheb wa taraj mikardand wa har mahalli ki az dar harb nihab shudi az ancha bud ziyadat tar abadi shudi*".

of the value of 202,500,000 tankahs. From the price schedule of Firoz's time, it is gathered that the average cost of a *man* of foodgrains was 5 jitals[59]. A tankah in the fourteenth century was approximately equal to about 50 jitals (48 jitals to be precise)[60]. A *man* in those days was equal to 14 *sers* of today[61]. Therefore one tankah (or 50 jitals) bought 10 *man* (of 14 *sers* each) or 3½ maunds of 40 *sers* each in Firoz's time.[62] At this rate the total agricultural production in Firoz Tughlaq's time would have been about 202.500,000 × 3½ = 708,750,000 maunds.

Out of this, two-thirds may safely be set aside for non-eatable agricultural products like cotton; damage caused by rodents, birds and animals habituated to nibbling in the fields; and for the consumption of large number of bullocks, horses, elephants and many other animals, indispensable to medieval husbandry, soldiery, nobility and even royalty, because they comprised sources of energy and means of transport. Therefore the quantity consumed by the people was ⅓ of this figure or about 236,250,000 maunds.

Today, for a population of 500 million, India requires about 100,000,000 tonnes of cereals every year. In other words, every individual consumes about 200 kilograms, 220 *sers*, or 5½ maunds of foodgrains in the course of a year. Taking this average as holding good for the medieval times also,[63] the number of people who consumed 236,250,000 maunds was (236,250,000 ÷ 5½ =) about 43 million.

Firoz Tughlaq's empire included the Punjab, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, major portions of Gujarat and Malwa and north-

59. Wheat was 8 *jitals* per *man*; barley, paddy and pulses were 4 jitals per *man*. See Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* (London, 1871), pp. 160, 260, 283.
60. According to Ferishtah the ratio was 50 jitals, according to Wright 48. Nelson Wright, *The Sultans of Delhi, their Coins and Metrology* (Delhi, 1936), p. 32.
61. Thomas, *Chronicles, op. cit.* (n. 59), pp. 160-163.
62. For all these calculations see Lal, *Khaljis, op. cit.* (n. 4) pp. 198-200.
63. Under Alauddin Khalji's rationing system, each household was given half a *man* of grain per day. "Half a *man* (approximately 6 or 7 modern *sers*) per day was a reasonable quantity in those days for a normal family with one or two servants."
Lal, *Khaljis, op. cit.* (n. 4) pp. 203-204.

ern Bihar.[64] In the absence of precise knowledge of the area which came under the revenue regulations in Malwa, we may, for convenience's sake, take into account the whole of present Bihar state and drop Malwa. Thus the total area of Firoz's dominions approximated to the following.

Table 1

*Approximate area of Firoz Tughlaq's empire*

| | |
|---|---|
| Punjab (undivided) | 253,000 sqr. Kilometers |
| Delhi | 1,500 ,, ,, |
| Uttar Pradesh | 293.800 ,, ,, |
| Gujarat | 187,100 ,, ,, |
| Bihar | 174,000 ,, ,, |
| Total | 909.400 Sqr. Km. |

The total area of India before partition (or the India of medieval times minus Kabul and Qandhar) was 4,052,950 sqr. km. Firoz's empire comprised approximately one fourth of this area, and contained 43 million inhabitants. The population of the whole of India, therefore, was roughly four times this number or 172 million. But since the empire of Firoz had within its dominions rather thickly populated regions, the total popultion of India was probably a little less than 172 million, say approximately 168 to 170 million.

64. Sind was incorporated after the revenue figures had been settled by Wazir Khwaja Hisamuddin Junaidi, who after an extensive tour of the dominions for six long years had fixed the total revenue after careful calculations. Afif, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15) pp. 93-94.

# VI

## A. D. 1400-1600

The demographie recovery noticed by Shams Siraj Afif was short-lived. After Firoz there was a speetaeular deeline in India's population. His suecessors fought a long-drawn out eivil war for one full deeade in which "the people were dispersed and the learned seattered."[1] Timur invaded the country in 1398-99 and swept everything before him. His invasion resulted in a loss of thousands of people killed and eaptives carried away. But while the trend of the population was only downward in the late fourteenth century, there was progressive depopulation throughout the fifteenth.

The fifteenth eentury was a period of politieal disintegration. The states into which the eountry broke up, fought against one another with revenge and zeal. On a study of Muhammad Bihamid Khani's *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, one is forced to conclude that in the times of the later Tughlaqs even small towns like Kalpi had taken to warfare after the fashion of big States. It appears that medieval people fought just for the sake of fighting.[2] Whether it were the successors of Timur direeting the pillage of the Punjab; or a Rai Sumer, a Jasrath Khokhar or a Tuhghan Rais defying the authority of the Sultanate; whether it was the constant warfare between Delhi and Jaunpur, the triangular eontest between Malwa, Gujarat and Rajputana, or the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms were testing

1. Afif. *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), p. 185.
2. *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, British Museum Ms., fols. 406a to 48ta, and Hindi translation of the same by A.A. Rizvi in *Tughlaq Kalin Bharat*, Pt. II (Aligrah, 1957), pp. 221 to 240 and *Uttar Timur Kalin Bharat*, pt. II (Aligarh, 1959), pp. 27-47.

their strength, it only meant loss of population and that too on a large scale. Writing about the warfare among the states into which Bahmani kingdom had been divided, Nuniz says : "There is little faith among the Moors, and they bite one another like dogs, and like to see one after the other destroyed."[3]

This is a very brief description of a very unhappy political situation up to about 1556. The loss of population during these hundred and fifty years was colossal. In terms of figures, it must not have been less than many millions.

Some of this loss was made up by the large scale immigration of the Afghans during the fifteenth century. From the inception of Muslim rule, individual scholars, saints and enterprizing adventurers had come to India and settled down here. During the Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century and after, some soldiers from the invading armies also had stayed on in this country. In the time of Balban a few thousand Afghans manned the forts in the turbulent regions like Mewat.[4] And yet this immigration was little as compared with the Afghan arrivals during the time of the Saiyyads and Lodis (A.D. 1414-1526), who invited them in large numbers to help them stay in power, and they poured into India year after year "like ants and locusts."[5] The actual numbers that arrived and settled down here is not known but it should have been considerable. With time they must have multiplied. Another factor which would have helped in the recoupment of population was the good administrative system of Sher Shah (1540-45), with the safety of roads and care of the peasantry, and still better and benign administration of Emperor Akbar (1556-1605).

Political history provides good guidelines for population assessment But the notices of a large number of foreign visitors in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries help even more in estimating the population of the country during this period. Their accounts share the weakness of Ibn Battuta's narrative. They could not possibly notice any striking change in the demographic scene. But

3. Cited in sewell *A Forgotten Empire, op. cit.* (II, n. 21) p. 326.
Also in K.S. Lal, *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, (Delhi, 1966) p. 136.
4. Minhajus Siraj *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, English trs. by Major H.R. Raverty (London, 1881), p. 315.
5. K.S. Lal *Twilight of the Sultanate*, (Bombay, 1963), pp. 126, 328-30.

their narrative is very important in two respects. They usually write in some detail about the kingdoms and regions they visit, and often also compare Indian cities with those of Europe, and since the number of inhabitants of many European towns is now known, it helps in fixing the size of the population of Indian regions and cities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[6]

Some important names among those who visited India in the fifteenth century (1400-1499) are Nicolo Conti, Abdur Razzaq, Athnasius Nikitin, Santo Stefano and Josafat Barbaro. Nicolo de Conti was in Vijayanagar in 1420. He visited both South and North and returned to his native Italy in 1441. Kamaluddin Abdur Razzaq bin Jamaluddin Ishaq us Samarqandi was an ambassador from Shah Rukh of Persia to the court of Vijayanagar. He visited many places; at Calicut he stayed from November, 1442 to April, 1443; and at Vijayanagar from April, 1443 to November of the same year. The Russian traveller Athnasius Nikitin was in India from 1470 (in which year he visited Golkunda)[7] to 1474.[8] Girolamo da Santo Stefano was a Genoese and was in Calicut in 1493. Josaphat Barbaro was an emissary from Venice. He visited "Caliculh" and returned to his homeland in 1478.

In the sixteenth century (1501-1600) many more foreigners came to India. The Italian Ludovico di Varthema came early in the century, and was at Calicut from 1504 to 1506. Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese official in Malabar from 1500 to 1516, wrote his account around 1518. Pires, who wrote between 1512 and 1515, also stayed mostly in Malabar. Castanheda was here between 1528 and 1538. Paes wrote around 1520 and Fernao Nuniz in 1536-37. Barros apparently never came to India himself but his Decada, based on Portuguese eye witnesses and therefore a very authoritative work on India, began to be published in 1552. Balbai, Sassetti, Fitch and Linschoten were in India during the decade of 1580's. Father Monserrate was in Goa in 1582 and in the court of Emperor Akbar for many years. Father Pinheiro was in India at about the end of the sixteenth century.

6. For population of European cities See Lach Tables in Appendix B.
7. R H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society, London, 1857), p. lxxvii.
8. Sewell, *op cit.* (II, n. 21), p. 22.

Even this short catalogue contains a long list of names. Any detailed discussion of their impressions about the cities and towns of India is neither possible nor quite necessary from our view point. We shall therefore confine our study only to the remarks about the population of the regions and cities visited by them.

In the extreme south, the Cape area was sparsely populated and infested with wild beasts. On the west coast, the Kerala region was full of people. It had the great ports of Quilon, Cochin, Cranganore, Calicut and Mahe. About Quilon a Jesuit visitor of 1569 says that in its environs are twenty-three villages and these are "heavily populated places"[9] Near the city of Cochin there were a number of suburban villages.[10] In the city itself in the two Jesuit elementary schools there were 270 students in 1570.[11] "Besides Cochin is said to have had "houses like those of Rome".[12] Cranganore, as described by a priest of the name of Joseph, consisted of gentiles divided into three classes : gentlemen Nayars, farmers and fishermen.[13] Pires affirms that there were 150,000 Nayars in Malabar.[14] They had no other duty than to serve in war. Calicut, an important town from antiquity, was reported by Josafat Barbaro to be "of verie great fame, being as it were, a staple of merchants of various places.[15] According to a letter of Girolamo Sernigi, sent to a colleague in Florence in July, 1499, Calicut was reported to be "bigger than Lisbon." and Calicut's population in 1500 may have been about 100,000 and in 1600, 150,000.[16] The territory between Calicut and Cannanore is described as being cluttered with Moorish towns, one of which was Mahe. Barbosa gives the names of a large number of such towns well-populated with Nayars.[17] The

9. Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), p. 447.
10. *Loc. cit.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 448.
12. *Ibid*, p. 433.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 157-58.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 362.
15. Cited in Penrose, *Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), p. 26; Lach, I, p. 64.
16. Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24) I, p. 155. The population of Lisbon in 1527 was 58,860 ; in 1629 its inhabitants numbered 110,800. Since Calicut was bigger than Lisbon its population in 1500 may have been about 100,000 and in 1600, 150,000. Lach, I, bk. II, p. 665, n. Also Lach Tables in Appendix B.
17. Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, two volumes (Hakluyt Society, London, 1918-21), II, pp. 85-88.

narratives of Barbosa and other Portuguese writers in the sixteenth century corroborate the impression of Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth that the Malabar coastal strip was very thickly populated About Cannanore, "an international trading centre," Castanheda says that "this is a large city with a fine bay."[18]

Since the Malabar coast formed part of the Vijayanagar Empire, we may as well consider the situation in the major towns of the kingdom's interior here only. Vijayanagar the capital was the greatest city. It caught the eye and the imagination of almost every visitor—Paes. Nuniz, A. Razzaq, Nikitin, Varthema, Barbosa etc. To Varthema it was a second paradise,[19] to Barbosa its inhabitants were numerous beyond counting ; the streets overflowing with the multitudes of them.[20] Santo Stefano observes that there were a thousand Christian houses in Vijayanagar.[21] Using a co-efficient of five residents to one house, the Christians alone would be about 5,000. Paes says that Vijayanagar was as large as Rome.[22] It is estimated by modern scholars that the city had a population of 500,000 in the first half of the sixteenth century [23] Vijayanagar was perhaps the largest city in the world in the fifteenth century.

Other important towns in the Vijayanagar Empire were Bednur, Anegundi (compared by Nuniz with Lisbon), Adoni. Kurnool, Bezwada, Udaigiri, Seringapatam, Mysore, Trichnopoly, Tanjore, Madura, Devipatanam, Rameshvaram, Kanchi ; and on the eastern coast Negapatam, St. Thome (Madras), Pulicat, Vellore and Malaipuram. The whole of the countryside was well-cultivated, which also shows that it was thickly populated. Portuguese accounts suggest that the Indians, unlike the Europeans, were relatively free from disease and pestilence.[24] Jan Van Linschoten also talks of the

18. Castanheda's account as translated in Richard Eden, *The First Book of the Historie of the Discoveries and Conquest of the East Indies by the Portingals* (London, 1582), It, p. 425, cited in Lach, I, p. 350.
19. Lach, I, p 370.
20 Barbosa, *op cit.*, p. 202.
21. Major, *op. cit.* (n. 7), p. 5.
22 "Paes also states (Sewell, p. 277) that there were more than 100,000 houses in Vijayanagar ; this would mean a population of half a million or somewhat more. .." Moreland, *op cit.* (1, n. 8), p. 14n.
23. G S. Dixit, "Economic Conditions in the time of Krishnadevaraya", in the Vijayanagar Sexcentenary volume, (Dharwar, 1936), p. 215.
24. Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), 1. p. 62.

longevity of South Indians.[25]

Returning to the West coast, we find that Goa was a great emporium, an impressive city, and a centre of maritime activity.[26] Its ruler (Sabaio) had large fleets, excellent fortifications and a sizable army. Emissaries reportedly came to his court from as far away as Aden and Cairo.[27] The College at Goa had 720 students in 1569.[28] Its population in 1640 is said to have amounted to 190,000.[29]

Further north, Dabhul is described as being "one of the most populous and maritime cities". The Portuguese sacked it in 1509, but Barbosa, who probably arrived at Dabhul after this event, reports that it "is now peopled and as prosperous as before, and wealthy."[30] The Portuguese bring out clearly that before they arrived at Chaul, ships from Ormuz, Cambay, and Malabar traded there regularly. The city itself in the trading months "is like a fair."[31] There are similar references about Thana (Tana) and other neighbouring places. Salsette island in 1568 had a population of 200,000. The Christian converts alone numbered 2,000.[32]

Gujarat was commonly known as Cambay to the Portuguese as well as Muslim writers. Castanheda calls it "the chief kingdom of India."[33] The Sultan of Gujarat is said to have jurisdiction over sixty thousand towns,[34] large and small, both along the sea coast and scattered throughout the interior. The important towns were Ahmedabad, Baroda, Broach, and Cambay. According to Castanheda, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat had assembled in 1534, at the time of his entry into Mandu, a force of 150,000 cavalry and 500,000 infantry.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 487.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 391.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 448. In September 1557 Goa suffered from an epidemic like influenza. Lach, I, p. 433.
29. Della Valle, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, trs. by Edward Grey, two volumes, Hakluyt Society (London, 1892), I, p. 157 n.
30. Barbosa, *op. cit.* (n. 17), I, p. 162.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
32. Lach, I, p. 448.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
34. Castanheda in Pedro de Azevedo (ed.) *Historia do descobrimento e conquista da India pelos Portuguese*, 3rd ed. (Coimbra, 1928), II, p. 314, cited in Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), p. 401.

Of the chief cities of Gujarat, Cambay and Ahmedabad probably were the greatest. In Cambay flourished numerous industries and crafts,[35] it was visited by "about three hundred ships of different countries every year".[36] The city had many great buildings and many fair houses, very lofty with windows.[37] It had a large population.[38] Pinheiro describes Cambay in 1595 as "the first city of Gujarat not dissimilar to Evora in Portugal.[39] When Castanheda was in India (1528-38) the city was reported to have had 130,000 hearths (about 650,000 inhabitants) within the city walls. The royal palaces, warehouses, and arsenals, which occupied as much space as Evora, were separate from the city.[40] It was so renowned in the sixteenth century that Queen Elizabeth I of England knew of Akbar as the "king of Cambaya."[41]

Ahmedabad, the capital of the province of Gujarat, was equally prosperous and populous. Founded by Ahmad Shah of Gujarat (1411-42), it rapidly developed into a great city. Abul Fazl's description that the city had 380 wards, "each of which is like a city", may be exaggerated.[42] But Ali Muhammad Khan, the author of *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, repeats the information of Abul Fazl and says that each of the 360 to 380 *puras* (residential quarters with bazars) was surrounded by a wall. He mentions 110 *puras* by name and gives details about their situation. Amin Ahmad Razi, the author of *Haft Aqlim*, completed in 1593, also praises it in glowing terms.[43] M.S. Commissariat also observes that "by the end of the sixteenth century...Ahmedabad came to be regarded as the largest city in Asia".[44] There is no doubt that the city and its suburbs had a very large population, but the arbitrary estimate of

35. Barbosa, *op. cit* (n. 17), I, p. 141.
36. *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna*, ed. Sir Richard C. Temple (London, 1928), p. 46.
37. Barbosa, I, p. 141.
38. Lach, *op cit* (V, n. 24), I, p 405.
39. G.B. Peruschi, *Informatione del regno et stato del Gran Re di Mogor, della sua persona, qualita, & costumi, & congretture della suo conversione alla nastra santo fede* (Rome, 1597), p. 60, cited in Lach, I, p. 458.
40. Castanheda, *op. cit.* (n. 33), cited Lach, I, p. 398.
41. Smith, *Akbar, op. cit.* (II, n. 32), p. 165.
42. *Akbar Nama*, trs. H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1948), II, p. 12.
43. Amin Ahmad Razi, *Haft Aqlim*, ed. by A.H. Harley, Maulvi Abdul Muqtadir, and M. Mahfuzul Haq, Bib. Ind. (Calcutta, 1939), pp. 86-87.
44. M.S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat* (Bombay, 1938), I, p. 101.

two to three millions by T.C. Hope in his *Architecture of Ahmedabad* (1866) is based on no authority.[45] Fedrici who returned to Venice in 1581 says that Ahmedabad was like Cairo.[46]

Peruschi has to say many interesting things about the empire of Akbar. According to him it extended 600 by 400 leagues (or 2,400 by 1,600 miles), and its chief cities were Cambay, Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Mandu, Patna, Jaunpur, and Ahmedabad. Some of these cities were as large as Lisbon (whose population around 1600 was 100,000). and Mandu invited comparison with Rome[47] (whose population around 1600 was 109,000).

Lahore was very populous. According to Monserrate, it was second to none either in Asia or in Europe, and "its population is so large that men jostle each other in the streets."[48] A little before the great Plague of 1616-24 William Finch noted it to be "one of the greatest cities in the east"[49] and Thomas Coryat (1612-17) considered it to be "larger than Constantinople."[50] He also says that Agra was not as large as Lahore but it was larger than Rome. The population of Constantinople in 1573 was over 300,000.[51] Lahore therefore had 400 to 500,000 inhabitants in 1600.

Pires and Barbosa report about the Delhi of Sikandar Lodi's time and describe it as a "heavily populated country".[52] More than a century later (1663) Bernier compares it with Paris. Paris in 1600 had 200,000 inhabitants.[53] Delhi's population in 1600 should be

45. *Ibid.*, p. 104. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), p. 183, however, says that not only in India but even in the world Ahmedabad probably had the largest number of inhabitants.
46. Lach, I, p. 470.
47. G.B. Peruschi as cited in Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24) I, p. 454.
48. Monserrate, *Commentaries*, trs. from Latin by J.S. Hoyland and annotated by S. N. Banerjee under the title of *The commentary of Father Monserrate* (Oxford, 1922), p. 159.
49. William Finch, *Early Travels in India* (1583-1619) in Purchas, IV, (pp. 1-77), p. 52.
50. Cf. Moreland, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), p. 13.
51. Lach Tables in Appendix B.
While Professor Russel (p. 130) believed that this figure, derived from the report of a Venetian ambassador was highly exaggerated, Professor Omar Lutfi Barkan of the University of Istambul, estimated the number of Constantinople's inhabitants in the third decade of the sixteenth century as being 400,000. *Cam. Eco. Hist. Europe*, IV, *op. cit.* (II, n. 7), p. 39.
52. Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), I, p. 419.
53. Lach, bk. II, p. 665. Also Lach Tables in Appendix B.

somewhere between 200 to 250,000. To Ralph Fitch (end of the sixteenth century) both Fatehpur Sikri and Agra were much larger than London. According to Jourdain, who was in India in 1608-09, Agra was one of the biggest cities in the world [54] A year later Joseph Salbanke (1609-10) also says that Agra was as great as London, and "very populous".[55] In c. 1600 Father Xavier estimated the population of Agra at 500,000.[56]

Fitch also says that "between Agra and Fatehpore are twelve (actually 23) miles, and all the way is a market ... as full as though a man were still in a town and so many people as if a man were in a market."[57] Similarly the Sikandara Road was also always crowded. From Agra to Sikandara, a distance of about five miles, there were markets and buildings on both sides. Therefore the total inhabitants of the region from Fatehpur Sikri to Agra and Agra to Sikandara should have been about 800,000 to 1,000,000.

The region from Delhi to Banaras and from Banaras to Patna had a very large number of towns and was very thickly populated. Further east, Bengal was a great kingdom as Orissa paid it tribute. Gaur was a large city and with suburbs spread in an area of 20 to 30 square miles. The city proper ran about 7.5 in length and 1 to 2 miles in width. Pires says that it had 40,000 hearths, and Barros rightly estimates its population at 200,000.[58] Fedrici visited Chittagong, "the great port of Bengal", in 1569. To Castanheda it was like Venice,[59] "with its numerous waterways and bridges". It was a city of great commercial activity. In 1563 Venice had a population of 168,627. Chittagong should have had about 150,000 inhabitants. Satgaon, according to Pires, was a city with 10,000 hearths (population 50,000), where many merchants concentrated.[60]

Foreign visitors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have thus made copious comments on the population of towns, cities and regions, and if they have not given actual numbers of inhabitants,

54. Moreland, *op. cit.* (1, n. 8), p. 13
55. *Loc. cit.*
56. *Jour. Asiatic Soc. Bengal*, New Series, Vol. xxiii, 1927, No. 1, p. 121.
57. H.C. Locke, *The First Englishman in India*, p. 103.
58. Lach, *op. cit* (V, n. 24) I, p. 414 and n. 567.
A change in the course of the Ganga as well as its pillage in 1575 must have affected its population.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 417.
60. *Loc. cit.*

their comparison of Indian cities with those of Europe indirectly provides the requisite information.

The impression of European travellers in the sixteenth century was that India was a very thickly populated country. Almost all of them hailed not from European villages but from its important and well populated cities. But they were invariably struck by the crush of the people in the Indian cities. The impression they leave is that India's cities swarmed with people, and its population was probably larger than that of Europe. They would not have repeatedly and enthusiastically written about India's teeming numbers if her population would have been lower or even equal to that of Europe.

A comparison by European visitors of some of the Indian cities with those of Europe indicates that the population of some important cities of India was in the following order around A.D. 1600.

Table 2

*Estimated population of some selected cities around A.D. 1600.*

| Cities | Number of inhabitants |
|---|---|
| Agra[61] | 500,000 |
| Ahmedabad[62] | 300 to 400,000 |
| Cochin (1552)[63] | 100,000 |
| Calicut[64] | 150,000 |
| Cambay (c. 1540)[65] | 650,000 |
| Chittagong[66] | 150,000 |

61. In c. 1600 Father Xavier's estimate. *Jour. Asiatic Soc. of Bengal*, xxiii, 1927, No. 1, p. 121.
62. *Akbar Nama*, *op. cit.* (n. 42), II, p. 12.
Commissariat, *op. cit.* (n. 44), pp. 101; 104.
Fedrici, cited in Lach, *op. cit.* (II, n. 24), I, p. 470.
63. Letter of Antonius de Heredia to Loyola from Cochin, January, 1552, Lach, I, p. 433.
64. Josafat Barbaro and Girolamo Sernigi, quoted in Lach, I, p. 64. Also *ibid.*, II, p. 665. See also text vide notes 15-16 *op. cit.*
65. Castanheda, *op. cit.* (n. 34), in Lach, I, p. 398.
66. Castanheda in Lach, I, p. 417.

| Cities | Number of inhabitants |
|---|---|
| Delhi[67] | 700,000 |
| Fatehpur Sikri[68] | 500,000 |
| Gaur[69] | 200,000 |
| Goa (1640)[70] | 190,000 |
| Lahore[71] | 400 to 500,000 |
| Mandu[72] | 100,000 |
| Patna (c 1640)[73] | 200,000 |
| Salsette (1568)[74] | 200,000 |
| Satgaon[75] | 50,000 |
| Vijayanagar (1565)[76] | 500,000 |

67 Bernier writing from Delhi in 1663 compares it with Paris Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire* (Oxford, 1934), p 282 Paris in 1600 had a population of 200 000 and in 1700, 350,000 See Lach Tables Appendix B Also Moreland, *op cit* (1, n 8), p 13

68 "Ralph Fitch says that Agra and Fatehpur Sikri were each greater than London" Moreland, *op cit* (1, n 8) p 13 For Agra's population also see p 60

69 Barros in H Cidade and M Murias (eds) *Asia de Joao de Barros* (Lisbon, 1945), IV, p 505, cited in Lach, I, p 414 n 567

70. Della Valle, *op cit*,, (n 29), I, p 157 n by the editor Edward Grey

71 "Coryat says that Lahore was larger than Constantinople, and that Agra was not so large as Lahore" Moreland, p 13 Agra's population has been estimated at 500,000 (see n 61) Constantinople's population has been assessed at 400,000 *The Cam Eco History of Europe*, IV, *op cit*, (II, n 7), p 39 400 to 500,000 for Lahore may be an uoder rather than over estimate

72 According to G B Peruscbi, Mandu invited comparison with Rome (whose population around 1600 was 109,000) Peruschi cited in Lach, I, p 454 For the population of Rome see Lach Tables, Appendix B

73 Father Sebastian Manrique, *Travels of Manrique 1629-43* trs F Luard and H Hosteo, Hakluyt Society (Loodon, 1927), II, p 140,

74 Organtino de Brescia to Europe (December, 1568) Text reproduced in German translation in Anton Fglauer (ed) *Die Missionsgeschichte spaterer Zeiten, order, Gesammelte Briefe der kathalischen Missionare aus allen Theilen der Welt Briefe aus Ost-Indian* (3 vols Augsburg, 1794-95), cited in Lach, I, p 448

75 *The Suma Orietnal of Tome Pires* (London, 1944), p 91, cited in Lach, I, p 417 Also *op cit* text vide n. 15,16

76 G S Dixit, *op cit* (n 23), p 215. Also Moreland, *op cit* (1, n 8) p 14 n.

The above assessment of the population of the country and some selected cities points to India being well-populated. European visitors, however, nowhere mention any rise or of fall in population. In this regard the country's political history provides the trends and, as said earlier, the numbers declined rapidly in the fifteenth century and rose again during Akbar's reign. (A. D. 1556-1605). Even during the second half of the sixteenth century some regions lost in numbers like Vijayanagar, while Lahore and Agra, and the tract lying between the two, rose in prestige and population. From the notices of foreigners studied in the historical background of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the following picture of the population of the country emerges about the end of the sixteenth century.

Kerala was very thickly populated. In fact the whole of the west coast up to Gujarat had a heavy density of population. Gujarat was full of people, so was more or less Malwa. Rajputana had known peace for the first time in many centuries, and its decimated population was now once again growing.[77] Sind countryside

77. Rajputana had constantly fought against the Turkish sultans of Delhi and lost great numbers. When Akbar gave it peace with honour, its population grew. But the kingdom of Mewar continued to fight against Akbar. One can get an idea of the loss and dispersal of population from war, which was Chittor's destiny, from a few examples of the sixteenth century.

When Rana Sangram Singh had fought against Babur (1527), he had under him more than 100,000 soldiers (Rushbrook Williams, *An Empire Builder of the Sixteenth Century* (Longmans Green & Co. : London, 1918), p. 152 But such was the loss of Chittorites in battle that, when seven years later, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat launched an attack against Chittor, Sanga's widow Rani Hadi Karmeti could gather only 2,000 cavalry to oppose him. In Chittor's massacre by Akbar in 1567, 30,000 people were killed. Besides the loss of life in *jauhar* in the first instance (1534-35) was 32,000 and in the second (1567) can only be imagined. Add to this the soldiers killed in battle. War continued and Chittor's population went on dwindling. No wonder that in the famous battle of Haldighat (1576 the force under Rana Pratap counted only 3,000 horsemen (G.N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors* (Agra, 1954), pp 55-57, 65-81. Lal, *Studies*, *op. cit.* (n 3), p. 171.

In the seventeenth century, when Mewar was at peace with the Mughal Empire its demographic recovery was quick. In a battle against Aurangzeb (1679), the Rana of Udaipur had in the field 20,000 cavalry, 25,000 infantry and 1000 elephants. (G.N. Sharma, *op cit*, p. 170). According to Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n 41, II, p. 433, the Rana of Udaipur had, about the end of the seventeenth century, under him 50,000 cavalry and 200 000 infantry.

South of Multan was sparsely populated, but Punjab, whose numbers had suffered a fall during the fifteenth century, was coming up once again. At the end of the sixteenth century, "the route from Agra to Lahore...lay through a dense population, and the same statement holds good from Lahore as far as Multan..."[78] From Delhi eastwards up to Bengal and Orissa, the country was well stocked. For the Gondwana region, lying west of Orissa and south of eastern U.P., Ferishtah observes that the kingdom of Garrah (Garrha-Mandla—Gondwana) was well populated on the eve of Akbar's invasion (1564).[79] The kingdom, 300 miles in length and 100 miles in breadth and ruled by Rani Durgavati, was so flourishing that in this territory there were 70,000 towns and villages, all well inhabited.[80] South India and the Deccan had large populations, although they were torn by constant wars.

W.H. Moreland has estimated that the population of India at the time of Akbar's death (A.D. 1605) or about 1600 was a hundred million[81]—about 70 million in northern and 30 in southern India. He bases his computation on three sources, (i) impression of foreign visitors, (ii) the strength of the armies and (iii) the extent of cultivation.[82] The design of Indian population as given by foreign visitors has been already discussed at length. Indian historians corroborate it; nay, they give even a brighter portrayal of the demographic scene. According to Nizamuddin Ahmad, the author of the voluminous but authentic work entitled *Tabqat-i-Akbari*, Akbar's empire contained 120 large cities and 3,200 small towns (*qasba*), each having under it a hundred to a thousand villages.[83] Wherefrom did Nizamuddin gather this information? In the twentyfifth year of his reign (1581), Akbar had ordered a general census of his empire. An imperial mandate was issued", says Abul Fazl, "directing the *jagirdars, shikkdars*, and daroghas throughout the Empire to draw up, village by village, lists of all the inhabitants, specifying their names and occupations."[84] Besides the general census, Akbar's *farman* listing the

78. Moreland, *op cit.* (I, n 8), p 12.
79. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n 6), I, p. 254.
80. Alexander Dow's trs of Ferishtah, II, p. 262.
81. Moreland, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), p. 22
82. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
83. *Tabqat-i-Akbari*, 3 vols (Calcutta, 1927-35), III, pp. 545-46.
84. *Akbar Nama*, trs. in E and D, VI, p. 61.

duties of the *kotwal* clearly lays down that "he should jot down the residents of every street from house to house as to what sort of men they are, how many of them are cultivators, how many professional men, how many sepoys, how many darweshes."[85] No such records are extant now, but Nizamuddin certainly appears to have had access to them. At least the way in which he mentions the large and small cities shows that he was sure of what he was writing. However, it is not possible to estimate the population on the basis of the number of *qasbas*, because each *qasba* is said to have had a hundred to a thousand villages, and this big variation leads us nowhere. But, as seen earlier, the average population of a large Indian city was about 200,000 to 250,000 inhabitants. On this basis, the urban population in Akbar's empire would have been 120 (cities) × 200,000 (inhabitants) = about 24,000,000 people. Now according to the census of 1961 the ratio of urban to rural population was 17.84 : 82.16.[86] Commercially and industrially the India of 1600 is said to have been more advanced than many European countries. At least it was not entirely agricultural and its cities were many and in a flourishing state. Therefore if this same urban-rural ratio could be taken as holding good for Akbar's empire also, its total population would have been about 133 million. Add to this the 30 to 32 millions for the South (not included in Akbar's empire) and the total for the whole of India in 1600 would come to about 165 million.

The strength of Akbar's army has been estimated by modern scholars at 4 to 4.4 millions, for in the second volume of *Ain-i-Akbari* Abul Fazl gives the figures of soldiers—horsemen and infantrymen—who could be called to service in Akbar's empire, and the total of these figures comes to a little more than 4.4 millions.[87]

It is interesting to note that Akbar's contemporary in the Ottoman Empire, Sulaiman the Magnificent (1520-66), too had taken a census of the households of his empire.

*Cam. Eco. History of Europe, op. cit.* (II, n. 7), IV, p. 39.

85 *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, English trs. by Lokhandvala, Oriental Institute (Baroda, 1965), p. 144.

86. Sah Dev Varma, *Facts and Figures about 1961 Census* (Ashok Prakashan, Delhi, October, 1961), p. 7.

87. R. P. Tripathi, *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, (Allahabad, 1960), p. 234. P. Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughals*, (Allahabad, 1941), pp. 258-68.
Elphinstone, *History of India*, *op. cit.* (I, n. 6), II, p. 304.
*Report of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, Vol. V, 1923, pp. 58 ff.

This army was organized on the quota system ; each high officer or autonomous ruler being expected to produce on demand a fixed number of troops. This system was not very different from the one prevailing in the Vijayanagar empire which had more than a million troops of its own. Accordingly 4 to 4.4 million should not be considered to be too high for the extensive empire of Akbar. Therefore, as in the case of the South, its numerical strength should help form an estimate of population of the North. Calculating on the basis of this figure in the ratio of 1 : 30 (adopted by Moreland for the South), we get a population of about 120 to 132 millions for Akbar's empire. To this may be added 30 millions or a little more for the South and the tracts not included in Akbar's empire, and the total population of India in 1600 would again come to about 150 to 165 million.

For an assessment of population on the basis of areas under cultivation, the estimate of Dr. Beni Prasad may be quoted at length. Dr Prasad says : "A comparison of the density of cultivation as revealed by the statistical figures in the *Ain-i-Akbari* with the present density shows the Western Gangetic plain as extensively cultivated and, therefore, presumably, as thickly populated as at present. The density of cultivation and therefore of population in the Eastern Gangetic plain to the border of Bengal appears to be far lower though one cannot believe with Mr. Moreland that it was as low as one-fifth of the present standard. Thus the Mughal empire minus Bengal and Gujrat and a few smaller tracts for which figures are not available contained over 60 millions of people The allowance of ten millions for the excluded areas by Mr. Moreland appears to be much too low. Something must be allowed for Gondwana. . . . On the whole, it seems that the Mughal empire excluding Afghanistan contained somewhat over 90 millions. The rest of the country, as we have seen, supported more than 30 millions. The total may have been somewhat more than 125 or or even 130 millions."[88]

It is thus evident that Moreland, who must be given credit for the pioneering work he has done in the field of medieval demography, has erred on the low side. The population of India in 1600 was much more than a hundred million. About the towns and

88 Beni Prasad, "India in 1605 A.C.", *Modern Review* (Calcutta, January, 1921) (pp 15-22), p. 16.

cities of India, Moreland's assessment is about correct, and we are in agreement with his statement that "the greatest Indian cities were most probably of the quarter-million to half million standard, and that in any case their inhabitants were not to be counted by the million."[89] But his estimate on the basis of the strength of the armies, seems to be on low. Taking the Deccan kingdoms and the Vijayanagar empire together, he says, "it is not unreasonable to infer that this part of India could actually put something like a million men in the field."[90] And since, "France had arranged before the year 1914 to mobilise one out of 31, and Germany one out of 32, so that, if the recruiting organisation of the Deccan and Vijayanagar was as efficient as that of modern France and Germany, their united strength of a million would imply a population of about thirty millions, while the population would be greater if the efficiency was less."[91]

The efficiency was certainly less. As a matter of fact, the efficiency of every country was necessarily much less in the sixteenth century than in 1914. In medieval India in particular a very substantial portion of the population was exempt from military service. Even so Castanheda says that the Zamorin of Calicut was able "to raise a force of 30,000 men in a single day, and could even bring 100,000 men in the field, completely equipt for war in three days."[92] Then there were the Nayars on the Malabar coast. The armies of the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms were in all probability more than a million each. Therefore, proportionately, a larger population than in Europe would have provided Moreland's 'one million' soldiers in South India. Moreland himself says that *"the population of southern territories was at least thirty millions, and probably substantially more"* (Italics mine).[93] One fact, however, militates against our having any high estimate of the number of regular troops, for in medieval times "the riff-raff and the rowdy" also

89. Moreland, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), p. 13.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
Sewell, *op. cit.* (II, n. 21), pp. 142-45, however, has a much larger estimate, more than a million for Vijayanagar empire only.
91. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
92. Castanheda, II, p. 350, cited in Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), I, p. 358.
93. Moreland, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), p. 20. Also cf. Beni Prasad *op. cit.* (n. 88), p. 16, who says that the population of the country south of the Narbada was substantially over 30 million in 1565. "It may have slightly increased in 1605."

used to join contending armies for the love of plunder.[94] This was as true of the South as of the North. Therefore, the rough ratio of 30 : 1 as suggested by Moreland as the ratio of the population to the armed forces may be adhered to.

However, Moreland himself gives up this method for calculation about northern India because he believed, "that the strength of the Mogul forces is unknown". Such is not the case, and one wonders how he missed to take notice of the information in the *Ain-i-Akbari* and Elphinstone's history. It is true that not all this army of more than 4 millions was ever called to fight at one single time, still its numerical strength should have helped him in estimating the population of the North as the strength of armies in the South had helped him in estimating the population of the South.

Moreland's low estimate of the population arrived at on the basis of areas under cultivation[95] has not been found acceptable either to Beni Prasad or Kingsley Davis. We have quoted Beni Prasad at some length. Davis also remarks that the population attributed by Moreland to some parts of northern India seems to be too small. Assam, Bengal, and Gujarat contained well over one-fifth of the whole population of India in 1911. If they had represented the same proportion in 1600, and if the total population would have been only 100 million, they would have had 20 million only. This seems too small a number for the ever thickly populated parts like Bengal and Gujarat. Davis adds, "the best policy seems to be to revise Moreland's figure for 1600 upward to 125 million..."[96]

But if Moreland's estimate of 100 million seems to be certainly low, ours of 160 to 165 millions is too high because it is based on pure mathematical calculation on the basis of Nizamuddin's number of big cities and on the strength of Akbar's army which after all was never called to muster at one time. This calculation overlooks some patent political and economic phenomena of the medieval period. Although the political scene had changed with the establishment of Mughal rule, wars were as common as before and natural calamities like famines and pestilences constantly recurred throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. All these served as brakes on any acceleration of demographic growth. Medieval means of

94. Afif, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), p. 289, Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I, n, 1), p 109.
95. Moreland, *op. cit.* (1, n. 8), pp. 21-22.
96. Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 26.

transport and communication could not effectively mitigate the horrors of famine and contemporary writers bear witness to great loss of life during periods of scarcity. *Tarikh-i-Daudi* details measures which Sikandar Lodi (A. D. 1489-1517) took to ameliorate the condition of the people in times of drought, which shows that during his reign famines occurred frequently. In the Mughal period we have detailed and graphic accounts of some occurrences of scarcity and pestilence. The Coromandel Coast witnessed a severe famine in 1540. Abul Fazl and Badaoni record a terrrible famine in 1555-56 in northern India, caused by the failure of rains. It was followed by plague which spread through most of the cities of Hindustan.[97] The dearth lasted for two years and was particularly severe in the Agra-Delhi region.[98] As the famine raged, and people fleeing for life died in large numbers, the roads got littered with the dead. Some even resorted to cannibalism. Agricultural activity came to a standstill. Delhi was devastated and the mortality as enormous.[99]

The Italian traveller Caesar Frederic was an eye witness to a famine in Cambay between 1563 and 1567.[100] Sirhind was a scene of similar calamity in 1572-73, and its inhabitants migrated to neighbouring village and cities. In 1573-74 scarcity, accompanied by an epidemic, stalked for six months the otherwise fertile region of Gujarat.[101] A deadly epidemic, probably a kind of malarial fever, ravaged Bengal in 1575, and was quite devastating in its effects.[102] Abul Fazl records a famine in 1583-84, but neither mentions which provinces were affected nor what amount of damage was done, but it appears that the calamity was severe.[103] The innundation of the Megna delta in Bangla (Desh) in 1584-85 killed "nearly 200,000

97. *Cambridge History of India*, IV, Ed. Sir Richard Burn (Cambridge, 1937), p 69.
98. Smith, *op. cit.* (II, n. 32), p. 28.
99. *Ibid.*, pp. 28,288.
Badaoni, trs. S.A. Ranking (Calcutta, 1898), I, pp 549-51.
*Akbar Nama*, Persian Text, *op. cit.* (I, n. 2), II, p. 35. Also *Ain.* (see n 104), III, p. 475.
100. Purchas, *His Pilgrimes* by S Purchas (London, 1626), X, p. 90.
101. Smith, *op. cit.* (II, n. 32), p. 93.
102. *Ibid*, p. 289.
103. *Ibid*, p. 288.

living creatures."[104] In 1587 and 1588 locusts destroyed crops in the Bhakkar country resulting in drought and migrations on a large scale. The story repeated itself in the same region a year later in 1589-90.[105] But the relentless drought which began in 1595 in northern India and lasted till 1598 was very devastating in its effects. "There was scarcity of rain throughout the whole of Hindustan, and a fearful famine raged continuously for three or four years...A kind of plague also added to the horrors of this period and depopulated whole houses and cities, to say nothing of hamlets and villages... Men ate their own kind. The streets and roads were blocked up with dead bodies .."[106] The Jesuit missionaries witnessed famine and pestilence also in Lahore and Kashmir,[107] but neither they nor Indian writers give any figures of the dead. But the famine and pestilence of 1595-98, preceded by an almost unbroken chain of calamities from 1584 onwards, must have had a malevolent effect on the demographic scene ; and the population of India at the end of the century would have been far less than the high figure of 160 to 165 million. A realistic estimate would be about 140 million.

*Besides being closer to the assessments of Beni Prasad* (130 million) and Kingsley Davis (125 million), the estimate of 140 million is also sustained by the modern demographic picture of India, production and consumption of foodgrains in Akbar's times, and also, though indirectly, in the studies of Davis and Clark.

The demographic pattern of India according to the 1931 census was like this. The total inhabitants of the country were 338,894,076.[108] Out of this the region not included in Akbar's

104. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, 3 vols English trs. I by H. Blochmann, ed. D.C. Phillot (Calcutta, 1939) ; II by H.S. Jarret, second annotated ed. by J.N. Sarkar (Calcutta, 1959) ; III by Jarret and Sarkar (Calcutta, 1948), II, p 123.
105. Mir Masum, *Tarikh-i-Sind* (Poona, 1938), pp. 249-50.
106. Nurul Haqq, *Zabd-ut-Tawarikh*, trs E and D. VI, p 193.
107. C.H. Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits* (London, 1926), pp. 77-78.
108. From the total population of 338,923,539, the figures of Andamans and Nicobars (29,463) have been deducted. Sikkim and Assam were also not included in Akbar's empire, but their population has been taken into account to compound for the population of the region beyond the Indus extending up to Kabul and Qandhar (Akabar's Subah of Kabul) not included in the 1931 Census.

empire had, in 1931, a population of 82,594,973 in the following order.

Table 3

*Showing the population in 1931 of the region not included in Akbar's empire*

| States and Provinces | Number of inhabitants |
|---|---|
| Hyderabad | 8,624,089[109] |
| Bombay | 11,994,702[110] |
| Madras States (Travancore) | 6,754,484 |
| Coorg | 163,327 |
| Mysore | 6,557,302 |
| Deccan States | 1,760,962 |
| Total | 82,594,973 |

From the above Table it is apparent that in 1931 the population of the area not included in Akbar's empire (referred to as South) was approximately one fourth of the total population of the country. If in 1600 the South contained about 30 to 32 or ("substantially more") say 35 million inhabitants, the total population would have been about 140 million.

The estimate of 140 million as the population of India at the time of Akbar's death is supported by another evidence. The revenue of Akbar's empire in A.D. 1594 was "three *Arabs* sixty-two *krors*, ninety-seven *lakhs*, fifty-five thousand two hundred and forty-six *dams* (Rs 90,743,881) and twelve *lakhs* of betel leaves."[111] About the time of his death in 1605 the total revenue amounted to 17 *krors*

109. In 1931 Hyderabad had a total population of 14,436,148. But about 2/3 of its area in 1600 was outside Akbar's empire. Consequently only 2/3 of this figure is counted in "South".

110. Bombay province's total population in 1931 was 17,992,053. But only 1/3 of its area was part of Akbar's empire. Therefore 2/3 of its population has been taken into consideration for the South.

111. *Ain-i-Akbari*, *op. cit.* (n. 104), II, p 129.

and forty five *lakh* (174,500,000) rupees. This figure, given by President van den Broecke, is based on Akbar's official accounts, and includes the collections from the Deccan provinces of 'Berar, Khandesh and Ahmadnagar, "which had not been annexed when the *Ain* was compiled."[112]

Taking the common rate of one-third as the chargeable revenue, the total value of food grains produced in Akbar's time would be 52 kror and 35 lakh rupees, Akbar's dam was 1/40 of his rupee and his *man* was of 28 *sers* of today.[113] And although the prices of high class food items, like good quality rice, had gone up since the days of Firoz Tughlaq, the ordinary quality food stuffs were, by and large, cheap. On the average about 8(to 10) dams bought one *man* (of 28 *sers*) of foodgrains in Akbar's time,[114] and one rupee 5 mans (of 28 *sers* each) and 3½ maunds (of 40 *sers* each) of today.

Following the same principle of calculation as was adopted for the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, the money value of the one third of total agricultural production consumed by the people was Rs 174,500,000. Since one rupee purchased 3½ maunds of cereals, the total quantity of cereals should be 610,250,000 maunds. With the average consumption of 5½ maunds per individual per year, the total number of inhabitants in Akbar's empire should be (610,250,000)÷5½=) about 110 million. Add to this the 30 to 35 million people of the South and the inaccessible tribal areas, and the estimate would again come to between 140 and 145 million.

This conclusion is also indirectly supported by Kingsley Davis and Colin Clark. Davis says : "Prior to the censuses people guessed the population of India to be much less than it really was...As time went by and the Europeans became better acquainted with the territory they were administering, the estimates improved...Yet despite the steady improvement, we find that even as late as 1867... the all-India estimate was apparently far too low...The best policy seems to be to revise Moreland's figure for 1600

112. Smith, *Akbar, op. cit.* (II, n. 32), p. 275.
113. *Ain-i-Akbari, op. cit.* (n. 104), I, p. 32.
Also Moreland, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), pp. 53,55.
114. See price schedule in *Ain-i-Akbari*, I, pp. 65-66.

upward to 125 million..."[115] Colin Clark accepts the figure of 100 million for 1600 but for 1650 he estimates the population of India at 150 million.[116] He has no explanation to offer for the rise in numbers by fifty per cent in half a century during which there was a visitation of a catastrophic plague in northern India followed by an equally devastating famine in southern. Surely if we accept his figure of 150 million for 1650 (after the great plague of 1616-24 and the great famine of 1630-33), the same numbers, or if not the same a little less, i. e. 140 million, should be a correct estimate for A.D. 1600.

115. K. Davis, *op. cit.* (1, n. 9), p. 26.

116. It may be noted that while not quite accepting the calculation of Moreland, both Davis and Clark in their Tables agree with his estimate of 100 million for A.D. 1600. This may perhaps be in deference to Moreland's pioneering work in the field.

# VII

## A. D. 1600-1800

The peace Akbar bestowed upon the country helped in the rise of population in the years that followed. In the seventeenth century the Mughal emperors Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb ruled. And contemporary accounts vouch that under them the forces leading to prosperity and therefore demographic growth were in full operation. Wars were there no doubt, but the major ones were fought beyond the Indus—in Qandhar and Afghanistan regions. The population of the Indian subcontinent as such was not affected by wars, except in the Deccan and that too in the last two decades of the century.

However, two sets of facts, almost contrary to each other, are available for this period. One is the harrowing tales of recurring famines; the other is the testimony of foreign visitors about India's large population. We shall take up the discussion of famines and pestilences first and then assess the impressions of Indian and foreign writers to arrive at an estimate of the population at the close of the seventeenth century.

In the early years of the seventeenth century northern India was visited by a pestilence which was unprecedented in its devastating effects. The bubonic plague which reged from the Punjab to the Doab between 1616 and 1624 wiped out a large section of the population. Starting from Central Asia, "it spread with extreme rapidity to Lahore, thence to Sirhind, to Delhi, Agra and finally through the whole country of the Doab."[1] In Kashmir also it was

1. Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir*, Third Ed. (Allahabad, 1940), p. 251.

very severe. When it was at its climax, about a thousand persons died every day. The mortality was about a hundred a day in Agra when the 'plague was fallen', to use the phrase of Sir Thomas Roe who feared that the whole town would be 'cleared'. What damage this plague would have wrought on Indian population may be visualised from the figures that are available about some European cities. Naples had 300,000 inhabitants when the plague of 1656 killed 130,000 of them. The plague of 1665 killed 100,000 in London.[2] Such great damage could be caused in one year's time. Here the plague raged for eight years and, ordinarily, should have wiped out the whole of northern India, but two factors mitigated its severity. It used to subside during summer months and its ill-effetes on the countryside, with habitual migrations, would not have been great.

Six years after the great plague came the great famine. "The Gangetic plain was not affected and Petermundy's account northwards from Gujarat shows that most of Malwa had escaped."[3] But in 1630 it struck Gujarat, Sind, the Deccan, and the country extending across India to the east coast (Vijayanagar region).[4] By November the weavers and other artisans had abandoned their houses in such large numbers that cargo for the English ships could not be procured.[5] According to a report by the Portuguese Viceroy to his sovereign, three million inhabitants of Gujarat had died by October 1631, while a million perished in the country of Ahmadnagar.[6] Abdul Hamid Lahori, referring to the famine which raged in Gujarat, Balaghat, Daulatabad and the Deccan, says that 'the numbers of the dying caused obstructions in the roads.'[7] The ill-effects of this famine continued to be felt up to as late as 1639.

Moreland estimates that between 1614 and 1659 there were thirteen famines or periods of scarcity in India of which ten occurred during the reign of Shahjahan.[8] As recorded by Jahangir famine stalked the Punjab as far east as Delhi in 1614-15. Coromandel coast and Vijayanagar regions were visited by scarcity in

2. Lach Tables, Appendix B.
3. W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, (London, 1923), p. 210.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 210 ff.
5. W.H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), p. 188.
6. Foster, *The English Factories in India* (1630-33), p. xxi.
7. Lahori, *Badsha Nama*, 2 vols. Bib. Ind. (Calcutta 1867), I, p. 362.
8. Moreland, *op. cit.* (n. 3), p. 205.

1618-19.[9] 1633-34 saw famine in Sind and 1635 in Surat and Golkunda.[10] Punjab suffered from continual famine between 1626 and 1637 and Kashmir as well as Orissa suffered from scarcity in 1640. Drought came to Bengal and Orissa in 1642-43 and to the southern section of the Coromandel coast in 1645-46. In 1646 there was scarcity in Agra and Ahmedabad and the next year in Rajputana, especially Marwar. In 1648 famine visited the Coromandel coast again, and in 1650 Avadh and almost the whole of India suffered from scarcity.[11] A prolonged period of scarcity in northern India began in 1658 and Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Sind and Rajputana saw famine and plague in 1659-60 "which swept away most part of the people."[12] Col. James Tod speaks of its effects on Marwar, but his description may be taken to hold good for all the affected regions. "Fruits, flowers, every vegetable thing, even trees were stripped of their bark, to appease the cravings of hunger; nay men ate men. Cities were depopulated.' The seed of families was lost..."[13] In 1661 many parts of India suffered again.[14]

There was a famine in Dacca in Bengal in 1662-63 ; in 1670 there was scarcity in Bihar in which according to Marshall, 90,000 people perished in Patna alone.[15] 1683 witnessed visitation of famine in the Deccan (Konkan). A virulent pestilence accompanied it and in one week a third of the Mughal army, campaigning against the Marathas, died.[16] Three years later, in 1686, a severe famine reduced the garrison of Sikandar Shah of Bijapur to mere 2,000 men and made him surrender to Aurangzeb. Two years later a bubonic plague swept away half the population of Bijapur[17]

It is not possible to estimate precisely the degree to which these calamities affected the population of India. However, it

9. Radhakamal Mukerjee, *Economic History of India* (1600-1800), Kitab Mahal (Allahabad, 1967), p. 19.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
12. Foster, *English Factories in India (1655-60)*, p. 210.
13. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (London, 1920), II, p. 455, cited in Moreland, *op. cit.* (n. 3), p 208.
14. Mukerjee, *op. cit.* (n 9), p 20
15. *John Marshall in India*, ed Shafaat Ahmed Khan (London, 1927), pp. 125-27.
16. *Cam Hist. India*, IV, *op cit.* (VI, n. 97), p. 283.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-86.

would be fair to assume that the loss caused by the great plague and the great famine in the early part of the seventeenth centuries was gradually made up. According to David Hume, societies invariably recover from the ravages of even the severest epidemics within a generation or two ; and this optimistic notion has been accepted as true by many later writers on population.[18] Medieval Indian famines were frightful and of common occurrence, prompting Davis to declare that "irregularity of monsoon...has made India a land of famine".[19] But about them there were two redeeming features. They occurred only occasionally and were confined to certain specific regions. As Moreland has pointed out, "famine itself was an exceptional rather than a normal characteristic of the country and the period."[20] Contradictory statements as they may appear, from the point of view of population structure, the statements of Davis and Moreland are not irreconcieable. Deaths there were in large numbers no doubt, but migrations to neighbouring provinces or enslavement of men, women and children in periods of scarcity and drought did not always cause any major demographic setback.[21] Famines were common, but population losses caused by them were made up late or soon.

An important question which needs investigation is how much time it took for the population to recoup from its losses after a spell of famine or pestilence.

The famine of 1630-33 might have wiped off large numbers in Gujarat, but "the country had recovered from famine, goods were to be had in abundance and...prospects of commerce were very

18. *Cam. Eco. Hist. Europe*, IV, *op. cit* (II, n. 7) p. 20.
19. Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 11.
20. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), p. 266.
21. Early in the sixteenth century Barbosa wrote of the Coromandel coast that if the rains failed it caused heavy mortality and children were sold for less than a rupee. "Caesar Frederic describes the sale of children in Gujarat about 1560 ; Linschoten when living in Goa saw children brought to be sold, and adults seeking to be enslaved.

*Ibid.*, p. 266. Also cf. Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 107), pp. 77-78 for Kashmir.

"From the annual report of the Jesuit missions for 1597 we learn that the pestilence was raging in Lahore in that year, and that the Fathers baptized many children abandoned by their parents".

*Cam. History of India*, IV, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 97), p. 142.

encouraging...Gujarat was again prosperous by 1639..."[22] But this recovery seems to have been exceptionally quick. The Bengal famine of 1769-1771 was devastating in its effects. Prior to its outbreak the population of Bengal was 13.06 millions, after the famine it had been reduced to 8.71 millions, and during these two to three years one-third of Bengal population had died. And it took sixty to seventy years for Bengal to regain its population.[23] Therefore, as pointed out by David Hume, demographic recovery in medieval times generally took one to two generations, or thirty to sixty years.

The damages of the early seventeenth century, therefore, would have been made up within the span of the seventeenth century itself. Besides, this century was a period of comparative peace, and peace was conducive not only to demographic recovery but also to the growth of population. The population recovered slowly and then grew steadily under Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb (1605-1707), especially in northern India, and northern India accounted for nearly three-fourths of India's total population. During this period certain phenomena, which may have resulted in increase of population, are clearly discernible.

In the seventeenth century the territories of the Mughal empire reached the peak of expansion. Mughal dominions had gone on expanding right from the days of Akbar. Under Aurangzeb the Mughal empire extended from Ghazni to Chittagong and Kashmir to Carnatic. According to Bakhtawar Khan, the author of *Mirat-ul-Alam*, even Laddakh and Malabar formed parts of Aurangzeb's empire To it Arakan was added in 1670 by Shaista Khan, the governor of Bengal. Expansion of Mughal territories added the population of the acquired regions. This obviously meant increase in the total population of India.

Then, throughout the seventeenth century, new cities and towns came into existence ; the old ones became richer in numbers. It is not that small villages did not use to change into *qasbas* or small towns into cities in earlier centuries. In fact Muslim rulers, nobles, armymen and traders were all city dwellers, and it can rightly be said that Islam has promoted urban life and Muslim civilisation

22. Moreland, *Akbar to Aurangzeb*, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 217-18.
23. J.M. Datta, "A Reexamination of Moreland's Estimate of population of India at the Death of Akbar" *op. cit.* (1, n. 10), pp. 179, 182.

has everywhere been essentially urban in character. Still in the seventeenth century urbanization went on apace at an accelerated rate. Such a situation, besides other factors, may have been caused by an upward demographic trend. Spreading of the domestic system of manufacture, development of trade and commerce, and employment in royal and private workshop (Karkhanas), provided alternative employment to people who were tempted or forced to leave villages. Cities and towns encouraged absorption of a fair number of rural folk and provided new avenues of various kinds of employment.

Another factor is the availability of very cheap labour in the seventeenth century. In the late twenties of sixteenth century, Babur had written, "another good thing in Hindustan is that its has unnmbered workmen of every kind."[24] Wages were not high even in Akbar's reign as is clear from the list of wages for labourers and artisans given by Abul Fazl.[25] But in the seventeenth century any number of labourers could be employed in cities for the paltry amount of two or three rupees a month.[26] European travellers like Pietro Della Valle and Francisco Pelsaert also carried the same impression about the abundant availability of cheap labour.[27] In all probability, besides the highhandedness of revenue officials it was also due to demographic pressure on agricultural land that rural folk migrated to towns and cities. But there, due to the influx, they were sometime left with no option but to serve as cheap domestics or labourers, or even join the ranks of the sturdy beggars. All this is vouched for by foreign travellers.

In the seventeenth century a larger number of European travellers than in the previous one came to India ; and their impressions of Indian towns and cities point to an upward trend of the population.[28] On the west coast the great city of Cambay was on

24. *Babur Nama*, or *Memoirs of Babur*, English trs. by A. S. Beveridge, 2 vols. (London, 1922), II, p. 520.
25. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 104), 159, 235.
26. Moreland, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), pp. 184-193, esp. pp. 187, 192.
27. Della Valle, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 29), I, p. 42
Francisco Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India*, trs. by W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl (Cambridge, 1925), p. 7.
28. To have a correct perspective of their impressions, it is necessary to know the years during which they were in India. Therefore, some important names, with the years of their stay here are given below.

the decline because of the difficulties of berthing the ships,[29] but many other port towns were rising to importance. Thatta[30] and Multan[31] were also on the decline. But otherwise a number of new towns sprang up and small villages and towns developed into cities. Ahmedabad was founded in 1411, but by the time De Laet wrote

John Mildenhall, 1603-05.
William Hawkins, 1607-13
William Finch, 1608-11.
Pyrard De Laval, 1608-09
John Jourdain, 1608-17.
Joseph Salbanke, 1609-10.
Henry Middleton, 1610-11.
Thomas Coryat, 1612-17.
Nicholas Withington, 1612-17
Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19.
Edward Terry, 1616-19.
Francisco Pelsaert, 1620-27.
John De Laet, wrote 1631.
Peter Mundy, 1628-34.
Fray Sebastian Manrique, 1628-43.
John Van Twist, c 1630
John Albert de Mandelslo, 1638-39.
Jean Baptiste Tavernier, 1641-64.
M. Francois Bernier, 1656-68.
Niccolao Manucci, 1656-1708.
Jean de Thevenot, 1667
Thomas Bowery, 1669-79
John Marshall, 1668-72
Abbe Carre, 1672-74
John Fryer, 1672-81
Alexander Hamilton, 1688-1723.
Giovanni Francesco Gamelli Careri, 1695.

29. Ralph Fitch, *England's Pioneer in India*, ed. J. R. Ryley (London, 1899), p 12 found it a great and populous city between 1583 and 1594. So also is mentioned about it in *Ain, op cit*, (VI, n. 10-4), II, p. 248.
But Jahangir, Tavernier and Thevenot found it declining.
*Beni Prasad, Jahangir, op. cit. (n. 1), p. 246.*
Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trs. V. Ball, revised by W. Crook, 2 vols., (London, 1925), I, p 68.
*Indian travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. Surendra Nath Sen (New Delhi, 1949), p. 18.
30. Tavernier, *op. cit.* (n 29), I, p. 12.
31. Thevenot, *op. cit.* (n 29), p 77.

(1631), it had become almost as populous as London.[32] It may be noted that in 1636 London had 270,000 inhabitants.[33] Moreover, Ahmedabad had very large suburbs.[34] Surat had rapidly developed. According to Thevenot, it was so crowded and the pressure of people on residential accommodation was so great that "lodgings can hardly be had."[35] But Della Valle's remark is still more significant. He says : "Tis very populous; *as all other cities and places are in India* ; *which everywhere abounds with people* (*italics mine*)."[36]

In northern India, Lahore was very populous. Monserrate and Finch had written about its large population late in the sixteenth century. According to Sujan Rai in the time Shahjahan its population increased daily.[37] To Bernier Delhi (in 1663) was as great as Paris in beauty, extent and inhabitants.[38] Sujan Rai enumerates people of almost all nationalities as living in Delhi.[39] Fatehpur Sikri had been gradually abandoned after 1585 and most of its inhabitants seem to have shifted to Agra, so that Coryat (1612-17) found it larger than Rome. Manrique, who visited Agra in 1640, estimated its population at 660,000 inhabitants, "besides the large number of strangers who continually fill ninety caravansarais and other private houses."[40] Thus the population of Agra rose from over two lacs at the close of the sixteenth century to about seven lacs by the middle of the seventeenth century. And this was the position after the plague of 1616-24 had earlier devastated the city. In the seventeenth century the population of Sikri-Agra-Sikandara had probably touched the million mark.[41]

32. John De Laet, *The Empire of the Great Mogol*, English trs. by Hoyland and Banerjee (Bombay, 1928), p. 19.
Also *Letters from the Servants*, I, p. 305.
33. Lach Tables, Appendix B.
34. Mandelslo, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India* by M. S. Commissariat (London, 1931), p. 26.
35. Thevenot, *op. cit.* (n. 29), p. 21.
36. Della Valle, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 29), p. 30.
37. Sujan Rai, *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, ed. Zafar Hasan (Delhi, 1918), p. 81.
Also Thevenot, *op. cit.* (n. 29) p 85, and Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), II, p. 186.
38. Bernier, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 67), p. 282.
39 *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, *op. cit.* (n. 37), p. 5.
40. Manrique, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 73), II, p. 151.
41. In comparison the population of London in 1593-95 was 152,479 and in 1666, 460,000 (*Ency. Brit.* XI Ed., XVI, p. 965). The population of Paris in

This is almost corroborated by a royal pen. Emperor Jahangir writes: "Agra is one of the grand old cities of Hindustan...On its west side, which has the greater population, its circumferenee is seven kos and its breadth is one kos. The circumferenee of the inhabited part on the other side of the water, the side towards the east, is 2½ kos, its length being one kos and its breadth half a kos. But in the number of its buildings it is equal to several cities of Iraq, Khurasan, and Mawaraa-n-nahr (Transoxiana) put together. Many persons have erected buildings of three or four storeys in it. The mass of the people is so great, that moving about in lanes and bazars is difficult...Before the rule of the Lodi Afghans, Agra was a great and populous place...From that date (when Sikandar Lodi shifted the capital from Delhi to Agra [1505]), the population and prosperity of Agra increased."[42]

The countryside east of Delhi-Agra region was studded with towns. Both Ralph Fiteh and Manrique say that the route from

1590 has been estimated at 200,000 and under Louis XIV (d. 1715) at 492,600, *Modern Cyclopaedia* (London, 1901), VI, p. 305. Shahjahan probably transferred the capital to Delhi from Agra (1649) because of too much congestion in the latter. *Arch. Sur. Rep.* 1911-12, p. 2, and contemporary authorities cited therein.

42. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, trs. by Alexander Rogers and ed. by Henry Beveridge, (photo reprint, Delhi, 1968), pp. 3-4. A less authentic version, in the *Tarikh-i-Salim Shahi*, is more elaborate: "The city of Agrah is one of the greatest in Hindustan...Such is the immensity of the population, that from the hour of evening prayer to the close of the first quarter of the night, the throng is so densely wedged, that it is not without the utmost difficulty the people can pass and repass along the streets. As an attempt to ascertain in some degree the extent of this multitudinous population, I directed Melek Ally, the Kotwaal...one day to make a tour through the city, and count the individuals assembled in the different maarekahs or theatres for athletae, or pugilists: and his report was that in some of these places did he find assembled not less than two and three thousand persons, although it was neither the first of the year, nor any of those days of public rejoicing or on which it was usual for the people to appear abroad for amusemeot...Add to this, that every day through the year there are conveyed to the place by boats along the Jumnah not less than ten thousand loads of fuel (aod excepting the rainy season) not less than six thousand horses for sale daily enter the city from Kabul and countries io that direction (and all are sold out). I do not know in the whole world, in magnitude and the multitude of its inhabitants, there is any city to be compared with the metropolis of Agrah."
*Tarikh-i-Salim Shahi*, trs. Major David Price (Calcutta, 1906), pp. 16-17.

Banaras to Patna was full of large towns.[42] Patna itself was "a very large city with bazars ..inhabited by many merchants."[43] According to Pelsaert the eastern part of the country extending up to Jagannath Puri (Cuttack) covering a distance of six hundred kos, contained many large cities.[45] Bengal too was full of large towns[46]. Dacca, 'the largest town in Bengal', was known for its 'multitudes of inhabitants'.[47] So was Hoogly.[48] In the Deccan Thevenot found "a dense population from Aurangabad to Golcunda eastward to Masulipattam".[49]

European visitors were greatly impressed by the large numbers in the cities, but they say little about the rural population. "There is almost an universal tendency on the part of Europeans, who are highly urbanized, to under-estimate the population of the peasant regions."[50] In fact they do not underestimate, they are just silent about rural areas. We are, however, aware of the fact that it was in the peasant regions that the "teeming millions" of India lived, and Indian writers do not fail to mention this fact. Ferishtah, concluding his voluminous work with some general observations on India, rightly observes, "And the country of Hind for its excessive population and large stock of animals cannot be compared with any other country."[51] Bakhtawar Khan, writing during the reign of Aurangzeb, affirms that the country of Hindustan teems with population.[52]

The picture that emerges for the period 1600-1700 is like this. Europe including Russia had a population of 100 million in 1650.[53] From all accounts, estimates and impressions, it is obvious that

43. Fitch in Purchas, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 100), X, pp. 165-205, 180.
Also Manrique, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 73), II, p. 146.
44. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), II, p. 83.
45. Pelsaert, *op. cit.* (n. 27), p. 7.
46. Thevenot, *op. cit.* (n. 29), p. 96.
47. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), II, p. 86.
Bowrey, *A Geographical Account of the Countries around the Bay of Bengal* (1669-79), ed. Sir Richard C. Temple, Hakluyt Society (Cambridge, 1905), p. 150.
48. Bowrey, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
Also *John Marshall, op. cit.* (n. 15), p. 65.
49. Moreland, *op. cit.* (I, n. 8), p. 13.
50. K. Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 26.
51. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), II, p. 419.
52. *Mirat-i-Alam*, E and D, VII, pp. 163-64.
53. See XVI.

India's density was evidently greater. "Such a conclusion would fit what has been said about the long history of thick settlements in India."[54] In times of peace its population grew. High birth rate usually scored over high death rate. Warfare, banditry, famine and disease, confined to short spans of time and spaces of territory, did not usually affect the overall demographic structure; only when these grew in dimension, population was adversely affected.[55] The demographic recovery during the latter half of the sixteenth century was nearly 20 million. If the same rate of recovery was maintained in the seventeenth century also, the population about the year 1700 would probably have been 175 million or even a little more.

If the seventeenth century in India was a century of demographic growth, the eighteenth was of decline. All evidence invariably leads to this conclusion. During the last twenty years of the seventeenth century, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb was strenuously fighting against the Marathas and the independent Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan. In the early years of the war, the loss of life does not appear to have been great.[56] But a quarter of a century's warfare in the Deccan did show its effects, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century pestilence and death began to stalk the Deccan countryside. From 1702 to 1704 there was no rain, "but instead plague prevailed. In these two years there expired over two million souls."[57] In 1706 Aurangzeb moved northwards, "leaving behind (in the words of the eye-witness Manucci)...fields... devoid of trees and bare of crops, their place being taken by the bones of beasts. Instead of verdure all is blank and barren. The country is so entirely desolated and depopulated that neither fire nor light can be found in the course of a three or four days' journey..."[58]

This picture may be a little overdrawn. But Khafi Khan, 'one of the best and most impartial historians' of Mughal India, says

54. K. Davis *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 25.

55. Cf. the case of Patna. A little before the middle of the seventeenth century (1628-43), Manrique, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 73), II, p. 140 estimated its population at 200,000. But in the Patna famine of 1671, as estimated by Marshall (1668-72) it had lost half its inhabitants. Marshall, *op. cit.* (n. 15), pp. 152-53.

56. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 1,) II, p. 445; IV, pp. 243-44.

57. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 97.

58. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 252.

almost the same thing about the Deccan during Aurangzeb's last days ; and he makes repeated references to killings, destruction of cultivation, the reduction of carriage-animals to 'skin and bone', the ravaging and burning of the inhabited places.[59] Such details certainly show a turn in the demographic trend.

After the death of Aurangzeb (1707), centrifugal forces were let loose in northern India. The Mughal princes fought wars of succession, and in one battle (between Shah Alam and Azam Tara), "one hundred and eighty thousand horsemen lay dead, without speaking of the "infantry or the elephants."[60] Many provincial governors declared independence, and also fought with neighbouring states for self-aggrandisement. The eighteenth century in its demographic decline is comparable in many ways to the fifteenth. In the Punjab the Sikhs rose under their leader Banda, whose depradations and killings in the Punjab and U.P. were commensurate only with the ruthless way in which he and his followers were crushed and killed. The Jats were also destroying and killing and in turn were being killed. The Marathas were speading in all parts of the country with the help of the sword, and Gujarat, Malwa, Rajasthan, Bengal and the Delhi region—indeed the whole of northern India—witnessed massacres and killings on a large scale. From 1720 onwards Gujarat enjoyed no respite from "perpetual skirmishing, murder and robbery in open day : caravans pillaged, and villages burning or desolated."[61] Rajputana's population suffered similarly if not more. Maratha invasions and internal feuds disseminated population. The situation in Mewar about the end of the eighteenth century is graphically described by Tod. He writes, "the agriculturist never certain of the fruits of his labour, abandoned his fields, and at length his country ; mechanical industry found no recompense, and commerce was at the mercy of unlicensed spoliation. In a very few years Mewar lost half her population, her land lay waste..."[62] The conditions similar to Mewar prevailed

59. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, *op. cit.* (I, n. 3), II, pp. 470-540.
60. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), IV, p. 403.
61. Grant Duff, J.C., *History of the Mahrattas* (Bombay, 1878), I, p. 336. For Marathas in Gujarat also see W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed. and continued by Jadunath Sarkar (Calcutta, 1921-22), II, chapter VIII.
62. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities*, *op. cit.* (n. 13), I, pp. 514-15.

almost throughout Rajasthan.[63] In Bengal the continual attacks of the Marathas adversely affected its population. U.P. and Delhi regions suffered equally badly. The Mughal power had reached its nadir of decline. Maratha wars and ambition against Delhi were keen. "It is significant that the chief gateway of every Maratha fortress is Delhi Gate."[64] The French and the English also joined in this sanguine business. Whether they joined hands with the Indian prinees in their wars and increased the strength of the armies on the two sides, or they themselves fought against Indian rulers, the result was the same : greater loss to Indian numbers.[65]

Over and above this, foreign invasions also followed in quick succession. Nadir Shah invaded the country in 1739. Besides the loss of life in the Punjab and decimation of the Mughal army, in Delhi itself he massacred not less than 30,000 people.[66] Ahmad Shah Abdali followed in the footsteps of Nadir Shah and led a number of campaigns in each of which there was great loss of life. In his first invasion (1748), all men bearing arms in Sarhind were put to the sword. His killings in the Punjab, massaeres at Mathura (1757), and mass deportations were followed by famine and pestilence.[67] The battle of Panipat (1761) was preceded by famine and followed by pestilence. In the battle itself 100,000 men were killed and, aceording to *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, no less than 20,000 persons were carried away as captives to Afghanistan.[68]

Internal wars, external invasions, famines and pestilenees, had a devastating effect on both urban and rural population. W. Franeklin, who travelled through the major parts of northern India between 1793 and 1796,[69] writes an eye-witness aecount of Delhi.

63. See A C. Banerjee, *Lectures on Rajput History*, (Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1962), Lecture VI entitled "Rajasthan in Decline", pp. 136-76.
64. *Cambridge History of India*, IV, *op. cit* (VI, n. 97), p. 397.
65. E.g. in the war against Chanda Saheb, who was helped by Dupleix, Nasir Jung fought with 70 000 eavalry and 100,000 infantry (1750).
*Cam Hist. of Irdia*, V, *op. cit* (II, n. 35), p. 176.
66. *Com. Hist. India*, IV, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 97), p. 613 n. 2 says that some estimate the number of the killed above 100,000.
67. For Ahmad Shah Abdali's bloody campaigns against the Jats see Irvine in *Indian Antiquary*, 1907, Vol. 36, pp. 46 ff.
68. *Camb. Hist. India*, IV, pp. 424-25, also 474 n. 3.
69. W. Franeklin, *The History of the Reign of the Shah-Aulum*, (Allahabad, 1915: First published 1798), Preface, p. i.

He says that ever since the massacre of Nadir Shah, Delhi was "but very thinly populated." About the close of the eighteenth century, when he wrote, "the Bazars of Delhi are at present but indifferently furnished, and the population of late years miserably reduced."[70] The population of the cities of the Punjab was disseminated by the invasions of Abdali. Rajasthan and Gujarat cities suffered hard from repeated Maratha incursions, while the other regions fared hardly better. No wonder that in the eighteenth century no foreign or Indian writer compares the population of Indian cities with those of London, Paris, Rome, Constantinople or Cairo.

Famines took their own toll of victims. When it is remembered that Mewar had lost one-half its inhabitants due to wars and Bengal one-third of its population in famine by the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the loss to Indian population during the eighteenth century as a whole can be clearly visualised. Table 4 gives an idea of the calamities and their effects on population in the eighteenth century.

Table 4

*Major Famines in India in the Eighteenth Century*[71]

| Years | Regions Affected |
|---|---|
| 1705-08 | Deccan |
| 1709-11 | Scarcity about Madras and Bengal |

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

71. Adapted from R.K. Mukerjee, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 20.

The information in the brackets has been collected from other sources, quoted. But no exhaustive list of famines, floods, pestilences etc. can be prepared on the basis of the meagre information available in the chronicles for the eight centuries of the medieval period including the eighteenth century. But the effect on population by calamities like floods, famines, scarcity of rain, destruction of crops by insects and pests in the twentieth century could give some idea for the medieval times too. M. Azizul Huque has collected data about these from 1915 to 1938, and during these 24 years not a year passed (except three—1917, 24, and 25) when Bengal was not visited by one calamity or another.

M. Azizul Huque, *The Man Behind the Plough* (The Book Company, Calcutta, 1939), pp. 20-26.

| Years | Regions Affected |
|---|---|
| 1717-18 | Coast and Bay districts, Ahmedabad and Surat |
| 1722 | Bombay |
| 1728 | Madras and Bombay |
| 1731-34 | Madras |
| 1737 | Madras |
| 1747 | Bombay, Surat, Ahmedabad, Aurangabad (and Deccan, C.H.I., IV, p. 284) |
| 1751 | Bengal |
| [1761] | [Famine and pestilence in the Maratha camp at Panipat 'during which most of the cattle of the army died and it was after two days of starvation that the Marathas went to a battle. C.H.I., IV, p. 421] |
| 1769-70 | Bengal and Bihar. [In Bengal about 35% of the cultivators perished. W. Hunter, *The Annals of Rural Bengal* (London, 1897), p. 39.] |
| 1782 | Bombay, Mysore and Madras |
| 1783-84 | Northern India from Multan to Murshidabad |
| 1788 | Bengal |
| 1790-92 | Hyderabad, Deccan, Gujarat and Northern Madras |
| 1799-1801 | Northern India to Hyderabad |

Decline in agricultural and industrial production too helped to check population growth. There are recurring references, both in Indian chronicles and accounts of foreign travellers, of lands turning barren because of the flight of cultivators escaping from the tyranny of uncharitable revenue regulations and unscrupulous *mansabdars* and *jagirdars* in the seventeenth century. Any improvement in agriculture in the eighteenth century brought about by the cultivation of new crops like potato, maize and tobacco, and any reclamation of fallow land, were scored off by the tyranny of the great or petty

landed proprietors or local officials on account of the deteriorating political condition. Industry and commerce also suffered and urban population dwindled. In these circumstances there could have been no question of any industrial or agricultural revolution in the country—revolutions which were mainly responsible for the rapid rise of population in Europe. In short, during the eighteenth century, the population showed only a downward trend, and in 1800 may have been about 170 million.

At the end it would be proper to give in a brief form the demographic picture of India from the year 1000 to 1800. The population of India, estimated at 200 million at the inception of the eleventh century, declined rapidly because of killings, deportations and dissemination caused by Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions and the activites of his successars. In 1100 it was probably 180 million ; it may have been 190 million in 1200. Between 1200 and 1350 conquests of the Delhi Sultans in all parts of the country and the recurring Mongol invasions affected the population adversely, and it may have come down to about 160 million around 1350. Between 1350 and 1400, during Firoz Tughlaq's peaceful reign, some rise was registered, and the numbers probably rose to 170 million by 1400. The numbers again fell appreciably because of wars and famines in almost all parts of India throughout the fifteenth century. In 1500 it was probably 125 million, and at the time of the establishment of the Mughal empire (1525-26) somewhere near 120 million. In the sixteenth century, and especially during Akbar's reign, the population rose again, and about the time of his death it lay probably somewhere around 140 million During the seventeenth century this upward trend seems to have continued, and the population in 1700 was probably 175 million or even more. But by the year 1800 it seems to have been reduced to 170 million.

Estimates are by nature only tentative, and no finality is claimed about these figures. They are indeed at variance with assessment of many other scholars in the field, as their own are at variance with one another's as Table 5 will show.

Table 5

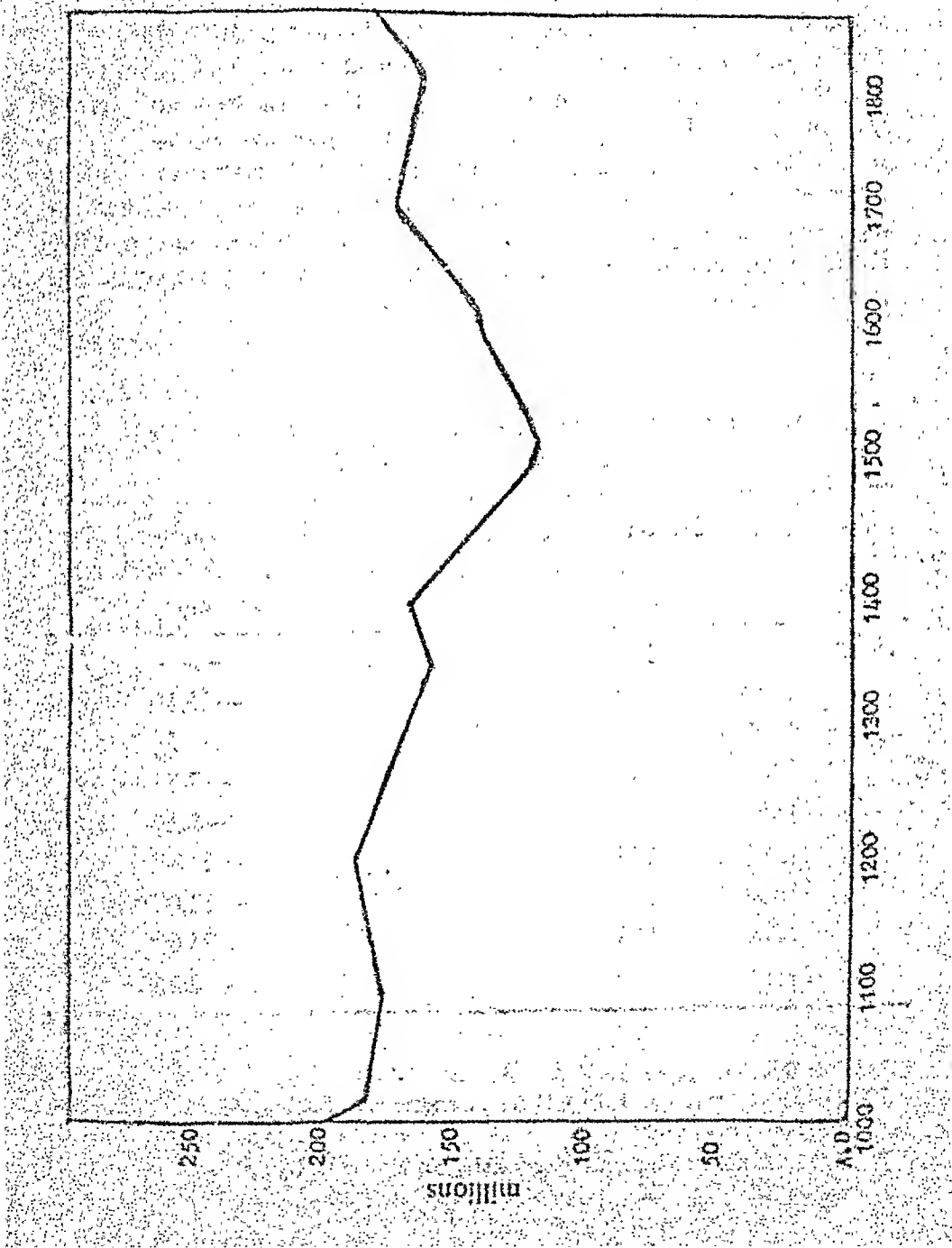
*Showing variation in Estimates of the Population of India A. D. 1000—1800 (in millions)*

| Year | W.H. Moreland | Kingsley Davis | Colin Clark | J.M. Datta | Beni Prasad | Our Estimates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1000 | — | — | 70 | 200-300 | — | 200 |
| 1100 | — | — | — | — | — | 180 |
| 1200 | — | — | 75 | — | — | 190 |
| 1300 | — | — | (1340) 75 | — | — | 175 |
| | | | | | | (1350) 160 |
| 1400 | — | — | — | — | — | 170 |
| 1500 | — | — | 79 | — | — | 125 |
| 1600 | 100 | 100-125 | 100 | c.110 | 130 | 140 |
| | | | (1650) 150 | (1771) 142.5 | | |
| 1700[72] | — | — | 200 | (1781) 150.3 | | 175 |
| | | | (1750) 200 | | | |
| 1800[73] | — | 120 | 190 | (1801) 169.0 | — | 170 |

72. On the basis of a study of the *Akhbarats* Jadunath Sarkar thinks that during the reign of emperor Muhammad Shah (1719-1748) India had 150 million inhabitants J.N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 4 vol. Third Ed. (Calcutta, 1964), I, p. 5.
73. It may be noted that as compared with the estimate of Datta for the year 1000, based on Ferishtah's statement and adopted by us, the figure of Colin Clark is very low. Clark's low estimates seem to be very low up to 1500, and high for the eighteenth century. Moreland's 100 million for 1600 is adopted by Clark. Datta too accepted it in 1918, but in 1960 he has revised his assessment to 110 million, while Davis would think even of going up to 125 Beni Prasad's 130 million for 1600 is close to our estimate of 140. As compared with the estimate arrived at by Clark and us, the assessment of Davis for the period 1600-1800 is on the low side. For 1800 Clark and Datta are almost in agreement with the assessment arrived at by us. Only Davis's reckoning seems to low.

The diagram given below sets out the population picture of India from A.D. 1000 to 1800 on the basis of the estimates arrived at by us.

*Diagram showing the rise and fall in the estimated Population of India—A.D. 1000 to 1800*



The demographic pattern of medieval India was different from the modern. Modern trends indicate a sustained growth of population. In the decade between 1951 (population about 356 million) and 1961 (population about 436 million), there was a rise of about 22%.[74] Between 1901 (population 235 million) and 1951 there was a gradual rise of 15.3%, except between 1911 and 1921 when there was a fall of about 1 million from 249 to 248 million.[75] Similarly the increase of population from 1881 to 1941 showed an average rise of about 15% per decade.[76] But sustained rise was not a phenomenon in medieval times. In view of the constantly shifting scene, it is not easy to determine exactly and precisely the percentage of rise or fall per decade in medieval Indian demography. However, during the eight centuries under review the population trend appears to have been in the following order.

Table 6

*Percentage of rise and fall in a century in the estimated population of India, 1000-1800*

| Year | Estimated population (in millions) | Percentage variation from the preceding century |
|---|---|---|
| A. D. 1000 | 200 | ——— |
| 1100 | 180 | —10.00 |
| 1200 | 190 | +5.50 |
| 1300 | 175 | —7.89 |
| 1400 | 170 | —2.86 |
| 1500 | 125 | —26.47 |
| 1600 | 140 | +12.00 |
| 1700 | 175 | +25.00 |
| 1800 | 170 | —2.86 |

74. Sah Dev Varma, *op, cit.* (VI, n. 86), pp. 1-7.
75. Census Report, Vol. 1, Part II A, Demographic Tables, (Manager of Publications, Delhi, 1955) p. 20.
76. J. M. Datta, in Modern Review 1948, *op. cit.*, (I, n.10), p. 34, K. Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 179, Table.

The demographic scene in medieval India betrays a constantly shifting pattern. The population is not static; it registers rise and fall by turns. If there are no statistics available on this perpetually changing picture, there is circumstantial evidence to explain it. In almost every case where decline or rise become observable, specific historical cirumstances can be cited which may have produced the result. It would be well to remember that when we deal with the demography of India, we deal with the population study of a continent. A period of decline in one region may be of rise in another and *vice versa*, but such minute details can neither be ascertained with any amount of accuracy nor are they quite relevent to our study. For us an overall demographic picture would suffice; and this picture shows an interesting pattern—a zigzag curve of rise and fall—saving the country from over-population or extreme depopulation. Nevertheless, in spite of all vicissitudes, medieval India remained a country of large numbers.

# PART 3

# Growth of Muslim Population in Medieval India

# VIII

## MUSLIM POPULATION
## PRE-1000 POSITION

The difficulties confronted in the demographic survey of medieval India are a little reduced while fixing the proportion of Muslims in the overall population of India between A.D. 1000 and 1800. Although no contemporary account exists to say how Islam spread in India, Muslim chroniclers very graphically describe the achievements of Muslim monarchs, provincial governors, rulers of independent Muslim kingdoms, and even officials, in effecting conversions. Muslim hagiological works, some reliable others not so reliable, too report on addition to Muslim population through conversions. But the actual numbers who embraced Islam year after year and decade after decade are not known. Some Muslims no doubt came from abroad as conquerors and soldiers. Some scholars and religious men also arrived either in the train of conquerors or at the invitation of Indian sultans or as refugees. Arabs, Abyssinians, Egyptians, Persians, Transoxionians and Afghans, all find mention as having come to India to seek refuge or fortune. But the majority of Muslims were converts from Hinduism. One has, therefore, to collect facts and figures contained in stray references of medieval writers, especially Persian chroniclers, from A.D. 1000 to 1800 to make a conversion cum immigration survey to be able to estimate the growth of Muslim population in medieval India.

A few known facts, however, provide dependable guide lines for reconstructing a fairly satisfactory story of the

rise of Muslim numbers. One important fact is that as against the zigzag pattern of rise and fall of the overall population in the medieval period, Muslim population shows only a constant rise. Another is that in spite of centuries of exertion in the field of proselytization, India has been converted only but partially. This proves that in contrast to the quick conversion of some West Asian countries, Islam received a definite check in India. This check provided provocation and enthusiasm to some Muslim conquerors and rulers to take to the task of proselytization with great zeal and earnestness. Their exertions and achievements find repeated mention in official and non-official chronicles and similar other works. Sometimes, besides broad facts, actual data and figures in this regard are also available. All this information is very helpful in estimating Muslim numbers as they grew from almost a cipher.

By the year 1000 A.D., the extreme north-western parts of India, in the trans-Indus region, had become introduced to Islam. As early as A.D. 664, consequent upon an invasion of Kabul and its environs (which then formed part of India), by Abdur Rahman, a few thousand inhabitants are reported to have been converted to Islam.[1] Subuktagin also fought against the Hindus and converted some of them. But all these events took place in the trans-Indus region, and we may, therefore, agree with Lanepoole in saying that in A.D. 1000 there were no Muslims in northern India east of the Indus.[2]

However, there were some small settlements of Muslims in Sind, Gujarat and the Malabar Coast. Parts of Sind were conquered by Muhammad bin Qasim Sakifi in A.D. 712. Whichever towns he took, like Alor, Nirun, Debul and Multan, in them he established mosques, appointed Muslim governors, and propagated the Muhammadan religion.[3] In Debul, for instance, he enslaved and converted some women and children, and left a contigent of 4,000 Muhammadans to garrison the place.[4] In Multan about 6,000 persons were made to accept Islam. Al Biladuri's narrative

1. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n.6), I, p. 16.
2. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Medieval India under Muhammadan Rule* (London, 1926), p. 1.
3. *Chachnama*, trs. E and D, I, p. 207.
4. Al Biladuri, *Futuh-ul-Buldan*, trs. E and D, I, p. 120.

indicates that the people of Sawandari, Basmad, Kiraj, and Alor were converted in large numbers.[5] The reports of Muhammad bin Qasim Sakifi to Hajjaj also point to large number of conversions.[6] Caliph Umar wrote to some Indian rulers in A.D. 717 inviting them and their people in Sind and Hind to become Musalmans. It is said that in response to his appeal many people 'turned Musalmans and took Arab names'.[7]

Muhammad bin Qasim remained in Sind for a little more than three years.[8] After his recall not only the Arab power in Sind declined rapidly, but also most of the neo-converts also returned to their former faith. Al Biladuri informs that 'in the days of Tamim, the Musalmans (had) retired from several parts of India... nor have they up to the present time (he wrote in the middle of the ninth century) advanced so far as in days gone by'. When Hakim succeeded Tamim, "the people of India had returned to idolatory excepting those of Kassa, and the Musalmans had no place of security in which they could take refuge".[9] Sir Denison Ross also says that 'after the recall of Muhammad bin Qasim, the Muslims retained some foothold on the west bank of the river Indus, but they were in such small numbers that they gradually merged into Hindu population. In Mansura (the Muslim capital of Sind) they actually adopted Hinduism.'[10]

In brief, because of the efforts of Muhammad bin Qasim and Caliph Umar II (A.D. 717-24) some Hindus in Sind had been converted to Islam, but by the time of Caliph Hashim (724-43), when Tamim was the governor of Sind, many of these Sindhi converts had returned to Hinduism. Those who continued to retain the new faith remained confined mostly to cities, particularly Multan. After Mahmud of Ghazni's attack on Multan their number seems to have gone up for, writing in the twelfth century, Al Idrisi says : The greater part of the population (of Multan) is Musalman, so

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-14.
6. *Chachnama*, *op. cit.* (n. 3), pp. 163-64. Also pp. 205-07, 208.
7. Biladuri, pp. 124-25. Also cf. *Chachnama*, pp. 207-08. Also see C. H. I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25), p. 3.
8. Elliot's Appendix in L and D, I, p. 439
9. Biladuri, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 126, Also cf. Idrisi, *op. cit.* (III, n. 20), p. 89.
10. Denison Ross, *Islam*, p. 18.

also the judicial authority and civil administration"[11] However, up to A D. 1000 there were very few Muslims in Sind.[12]

Similar was the situation in Gujarat. A military expedition was sent out in A.D. 636 from Uman to pillage the coasts of India. It proceeded as far as Thana (near Bombay).[13] About the same time expeditions were sent to Broach and Debul, but because of Caliph Umar's opposition to hazardous voyages, the policy of armed interference by sea remained in abeyance. Meanwhile commerce by sea continued. In the eighth century, Arab fleets attacked Broach and port towns on the Kathiawar coast.[14] Thus because of armed attacks, but more so through the channel of trade, foreign Muslims and indigenous converts began to be seen in the coastal towns of Gujarat. Ibn Hauqal (A.D 968) observes that 'from Kambaya to Saimur is the land of Balhara...It is a land of infidels, but there are Muslims in its cities'.[15] Masudi, who visited India in 916, found Muslims of Siraf, Oman, Baghdad and Basra at Saimur (modern Chaul) basides others who were children of Arabs born there. There were Jama Masjids at Famhal, Sindan, Saimur (Chaul) and Kambaya.[16] All these facts indicate the presence of some Muslims in Gujarat. But their number was not large. This finds confirmation in the fact that in an attack on Cambay's Muslims, in the middle of the eleventh century, when there was almost a general massacre, only eighty persons had been killed.[17] Besides, the population of traders is by nature and profession migratory, and the number of the Muslims in Gujarat does not seem to have been large.

Arab Muslims first settled on the Malabar coast about the end of the seventh century. 'These Arab traders who settled down on India's coast between the seventh and the ninth centuries were

11. Al Idrisi, *op. cit.* (III, n. 20), p. 83.
12. See also Elliot's Appendix, E and D, I, p. 459.
13. Biladuri, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 115-16. Also p. 415.
14. Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (Allahabad, 1946) pp. 31-33.
15. Ibn Hauqal, *op. cit.* (II, n. 36), p. 34. Also p. 457. See also Istakhri, *op. cit.* (V, n. 33) p, 27.
16. Ibn Hauqal, *op. cit.* (II, n. 36), p. 38.
17. Muhammad Ufi, *Jami-ul-Hikayat*, E and D, II, pp. 163-64. Also S. C. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat* (Bombay, 1964), p. 5.

treated with tolerance by the Hindus', and so they grew in numbers. In the early part of the eighth century, Hajjaj bin Yusuf (who sent Muhammad bin Qasim to Sind), drove out some persons of the house of Hasham, and they left their homeland to settle in Konkan and the Cape Camorin area. Refugees or traders, Muslims were welcome in India, and 'apparently, facilities were given to them to settle and acquire lands and openly practice their religion....'[18] In course of time mosques were erected at eleven places on the Malabar coast.[19] But till the end of the tenth century their settlements were only too small. The Muslim Arab historio-geographers, while describing the achievements of Muslims on the Malabar coast, exaggerate their numbers and influence for Sulaiman, who visited India in the ninth century, states that he did not find any Muslims or Arabic-speaking people on the western coast.[20]

In short, while there can be no doubt about the presence of some Muslims in Sind, Gujarat and on the western coast of India, their number till the end of the tenth century was almost microscopic. In Hindustan proper, east of the river Indus, there were hardly any Musalmans in A.D. 1000.

18. Tara Chand, *op. cit.* (n. 14), p. 33. Also Aziz Ahmad, *Studies In Islamic Culture in the India Environment* (Oxford, 1964), p. 77.
19. Tara Chand, *Ibid.*, p. 34.
20. Sulaiman Saudagar *op. cit.* (III, n. 31), p. 84.

# IX

## A. D. 1000-1200

In the year A.D. 1000 the first attack of Mahmud of Ghazni was delivered. He captured many frontier towns and appointed to them his own governors. It is also reasonable to assume that in these places some people would have been converted to Islam. In his attack on Waihind (Peshawar) in 1001-3, Mahmud is reported to have captured Jayapal and fifteen of his principal chiefs and relations some of whom, like Sukhpal, were made Musalmans. At Bhera all the inhabitants, except those who embraced Islam, were put to the sword. Since the whole town is reported to have been converted the number of converts may have been quite large. At Multan too conversions took place in large numbers, for writing about the campaign against Nawasa Shah (converted Sukhpal), Utbi says that this and the previous victory (at Multan) were 'witnesses to his exalted state of proselytism'.[1] In his campaign in the Kashmir Valley (1015) Mahmud 'converted many infidels to Muhammadanism, and having spread Islam in that country, returned to Ghazni'. In the latter campaigns, in Mathura, Baran and Kanauj, again, many conversions took place. While describing 'the conquest of Kanauj', Utbi sums up the situation thus : "The Sultan levelled to the ground every fort..., and the inhabitants of them either accepted Islam, or took up arms against him." In short, those who submitted were

1. For conversions at various places under Mahmud see *Kitab-i-Yamini*, Eng. trs. of Utbi's work by James Reynolds, (London, 1858); pp 451-52, 455, 460, 462-63 and Utbi, *Tarikh-i-Yamini*, E and D, II, pp. 27, 30, 33, 40, 42, 43, 45, 49. Also Appendix to E and D, II, pp. 434-78.

also converted to Islam. In Baran (Bulandshahr) alone 10,000 persons were converted including the Raja. During his fourteenth invasion in A.D. 1023, Kirat, Nur, Lohkot and Lahore were attacked. The chief of Kirat accepted Islam, and many people followed his example. According to Nizamuddin Ahmad, 'Islam apread in this part of the country by the consent of the people and the influence of force'. Conversion of Hindus to Islam was one of the objects of Mahmud. Al Qazwini writes that when Mahmud went "to wage religious war against India, he made great efforts to capture and destroy Somnat, in the hope that the Hindus would then become Muhammadans".[2] Sultan Mahmud was well-versed in the Quran and was considered its eminent interpreter.[3] He ardently desired to play the role of a true Muslim monarch and convert non-Muslims to his faith. *Tarikh-i-Yamini*, *Rausat-us-Safa* and *Tarikh-i-Ferishtah*, besides many other works, speak of construction of mosques and schools and appointment of preachers and teachers by Mahmud and his successor Masud.[4] Wherever Mahmud went, he insisted on the people to convert to Islam.[5]

There is thus little doubt that during the first thirty years of the eleventh century, consequent upon the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni, a few thousand people were converted to Islam. During and after his raids, a few Muslim colonies were also established, some in as far off places as Kanauj, Banaras, and Bahraich.[6] This is partially corroborated by the sixteenth century Lama historian Taranatha who refers to the settlements of the Turks in the Antarvedi or the Ganga-Jamuna Doab.[7] He further adds that

2. Zakaria al Qazwini, *Asar-ul-Bilad*, E and D, I, p. 98.
3. E C. Bosworth, *The Chaznavids* (Edinburgh, 1963), p. 129.
   Utbi, Reynolds trs. *op. cit*, (n. 1), pp. 438-39 and n.
4. Utbi, trs. Reynolds, *op. cit*, pp. 322-25, 462. Utbi, E and D, II, p. 37.
   Ferishtah, *op. cit*. (II, n. 6), I, p. 44.
5. Such was the insistence on the conversion of the vanquished Hindu princes that many rulers just fled before Mahmud even without giving a battle. "The object of Bhimpal in recommending the flight of Chand Rai was, that the Rai should not fall into the net of the sultan, and thus be made a Muslman, as had happend to Bhimpal's uncles and relations, when they demanded quarter in their distress".
   Utbi, E and D, II, p. 49.
6. About Banaras Ibn Asir says, 'there were Muslmans in that country since the days of Mahmud bin Subuktagin'. *op. cit*. (II, n. 10), p. 251.
7. *Indian Antiquary*, IV, 1875, p. 366.

during the time of Lavasena and his successors, prior to the invasion of Odantapuri and Vikramsila (1203), the Turks had increased in number in Magadh.[8] The traditional history of Maner and an inscription found there also corroborate the presence of Turks in Bihar in the twelfth century.[9]

In Mahmud Ghazni's time some conversions had taken place in Gujarat and Kashmir also. Besides king Kalasa of Kashmir (A.D. 1063-89) employed some Turkish architects to erect a golden parasol over the temple of Kalasesvara. Another king of the same state, Harsha, employed Turks in his army.[10]

From the above account it would appear that by the end of the eleventh century, there were a few thousand Muslims in Gujarat, Sind, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Kashmir. In the Punjab the sway of the descendants of Mahmud of Ghazni was precarious, and their proselytizing efforts could not have been quite rewarding of success. Therefore, the number if Muslims in the Punjab, like in Sind, Gujarat and Malabar could have been only small. Islam being a proselytizing religion, its followers have not only taken pride in winning converts but also often exaggerating the numbers of real or imaginary conversions. For instance it is claimed that in Gujarat some members of the depressed classes like Kunbis, Kharwars and Koris were converted to Islam by Nuruddin Nur Satgur.[11] But 'Nur Satgur's figure is one which is more legendary than real, at least in determinable historical terms.'[12] The story of the conversion of Cheraman Perumal of Malabar too is only legendary.[13] There is no doubt that the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni brought good crop of converts, and a few more Muslims were added through the influence of Muslim Mashaikh and traders in Gujarat and Malabar. But if the example of Sind provides any precedent, it is possible that many Hindus forcibly converted to

8. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, XXII, 1951, p. 240.
9. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, VI Session, Patna, pp. 123 ff. Also B.P. Mazumdar, *The Socio-Economic History of Northern India*, (Calcutta, 1960), p. 126.
10. Kalhana, *Rajatarangani*, trs. by M.A. Stein (Westminster, 1900), VII, 528-29, 1149, cited in Mazumdar, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 128.
11. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (Westminster, 1896), p. 275; Murray Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, (Calcutta, 1959), p. 43.
12. S.C. Misra *Muslim Communities in Gujarat*, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 17), p. 57.
13. Tarachand, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 14), pp. 34-35.

Islam during Mahmud's raids returned to their former faith. Very few Muslims were left in Sind after the decline of Arab rule. A local Karmatian Muhammadan dynasty was, however, ruling at Mansura and Multan. Mahmud of Ghazni destroyed it root and branch (1010) and Multan was deserted.[14] There was another wave of Shia immigrants. In 1175 Shihabuddin Ghori attacked, defeated, and massacred them; and the majority of survivors began to live in the guise of Hindus.[15]

Thus while the story of the conversions to Islam has been very enthusiastically narrated by Muslim chroniclers, the attitude of the Hindus to conversion and the endeavours of the hurriedly converted Hindus to revert to their former faith, has not been even referred to by them. Alberuni mentions a number of restrictions imposed upon reconversion to Hinduism,[16] but he has probably noted only the extremely orthodox Brahman position. On the other hand *Devalasmriti*[17], and many other similar works[18], lay down liberal rules for the reconversion of men and women who might have stayed with the *mlechchas* for even as long a period as twenty years.[19] All this points to a keenness on the part of the converted to return to Hinduism. We know that Nawasa Shah reverted to Hinduism at the earliest opportunity. There is also the case of Rai Sal.[20] Between Mahmud of Ghazni's death (1030) and Muhammad Ghori's invasion (1191-92) such opportunities of reconversion were many, even on a large scale.[21] Consequently, during this period of more than a century and a half, Muslim numbers do not seem to have shown any great rise.

About the end of the twelfth century, Muhammad Ghori established Muslim rule in India on a permanent basis. When he captured Bhatinda in 1190-91, he placed in its command Qazi

14. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, p. 27. M Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, *op. cit.* (IV, n. 20), p. 34.
15. W. Ivanow, *Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismailism* (Bombay, 1942), p. 34-35.
16. Alberuni, *op. cit.* (IV, n. 2), II, pp 162-63.
17. Published by Anandasrama, Sanskrit Series, Poona. Trs. by M.N. Ray in J.B.O.R.S., 1927.
18. P.V. Kane, *History of the Dharmashastra Literature*. 4 vols., II, pp. 390-91.
19. See B.P. Mazumdar, *op. cit.* (n. 9), pp. 131-33.
20. Utbi, E and D, II, p. 39. *Camb. Hist. India*, III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 23), p. 47.
21. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, p. 45.

Ziyauddin with a contingent of 1200 horse.[22] In 1192 he invaded India with an army of 120,000. A good number of his soldiers would have been killed in the sanguinary battle with Prithviraj. A major portion of the remainder (say 50,000) would have stayed on in India under Qutbuddin Aibak, who must not have been left empty handed in an alien and hostile country.[23]

Aibak entered upon a series of conquests. He despatched Ikhtiyaruddin Bakhtiyar Khalji to the East and himself captured Kol (modern Aligarh) in 1194. There "those of the garrison who were wise and acute were converted to Islam, but those who stood by their ancient faith were slain with the sword."[24] In 1195 when Raja Bhim of Gujarat was attacked, 20,000 prisoners were captured,[25] and in 1202 at Kalinjar 50,000,[26] "and we may be sure that (as in the case of Arab conquest of Sind) all who were made slaves were compelled to embrace the religion of the masters to whom they were allotted."[27] Ferishtah specifically mentions that on the capture of Kalinjar "fifty thousand *kaniz va ghulam*, having suffered slavery, were rewarded with the honour of Islam."[28] According to Ferishtah three to four hundred thousand Khokhars and Tirahias were also converted to Islam by Muhammad Ghori.[29] But some of these lived in the trans-Indus region.[30] Therefore the

22. *Camb. Hist. India*, III, p. 40.
23. Hasan Nizami says that 'the sultan then returned to Ghazna...but the whole army remained.. at the mauza of Indarpat'. *Taj ul-Maasir*, E and D, II, p. 216). Surely Muhammad Ghori would not have gone back all alone.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
25. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, p 62.
26. Hasan Nizami, *op. cit* (n. 23), p 231. Also Ferishtah, I, p. 53. Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), pp. 69 and 334 (n. 26), has missed to cite Hasan Nizami's assertion that 50,000 were enslaved.
27. Titus, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 31.
28. Ferishtah, I, p. 63.
29. Ferishtah, I, pp. 59-60. The authenticity of Ferishtah's statement has been challanged by Raverty (*Notes on Afghanistan*, p. 367). The numbers of Khokhar converts have certainly been exaggerated. Amir Khusrau refers to Khokhars as a non-Muslim tribe (*Tughlaq Namah*, Aurangabad, 1933, p. 128), and the way they were constantly attacked and killed by sultans like Iltutmish and Balban confirms Khusrau's contention. There is, however, nothing strange about Ferishtah's statement; only the figure seems to be exaggerated.
30. Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2) Appendix C, p. 369.

number of Khokhars who became Musalmans in India could not have been more then a hundred thousand at the most.

Ikhtiyaruddin Bakhtiyar Khalji's military success in the east also resulted in conversions to Islam. About the end of the twelfth or the begginning of the thirteenth century,[31] he marched into Bihar and attacked the University centres of Nalanda, Vikramshila and Uddandapur, erecting a fortress at the site of Uddandapur or odantaprui.[32] The Buddhist monks in these places were massacred and the common people, deprived of their priests and teachers, turned some to Hinduism and some to Islam. Buddhism did not die out immediately or completely in Bihar.[33] But Bakhtiyar's raid on Bihar did deliver a shattering blow to Buddhism and its lost followers were gained mainly by Islam. Muslim sway extended from Banaras through the strip of Shahabad, Patna, Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts,[34] and repeated references to the presence of Muslims in this tract from early times indicates that conversions were common in this region. Bakhtiyar converted some tribes in the Himalayan foothills also, and one chieftain, known after his conversion as Ali the Mech, had exchanged his animistic beliefs for the religion of Islam.[35]

During the time of Qutbuddin Aibak a large number of places were attacked and prisoners captured than for which actual figures, given above, are available. Figures of any conversions during campaigns to Kanauj, Banaras (where the Muslims occupied "a thousand" temples),[36] Ajmer (attacked thrice), Gujarat, Bayana and Gwalior, and the campaigns carried out right up to Bengal are not available. However, since the notices of medieval chroniclers are usually full of exaggeration where figures of the defeated or captured non-Muslims are concerned, it would be reasonable to take into consideration only those which are specifically mentioned, any exaggressions being rounded off by those which are not.

31. The exact date of the raid is difficult to determine. Ishwari Prasad, *Medieval India* (Allahabad, Fourth Impression, 1940), p. 138 places it "probably in 1197", Wolseley Haig (C.H.I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25), pp. 45-46 a little earlier than this, and Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), pp. 70 and 84 n78 in 1202-03.
32. *Indian Antiquary*, IV, pp. 366-67.
33. Fuhrer, *The Sharqi Architecture of Jaunpur*, pp. 70-73.
34. Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), p. 147.
35. *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, trs. Raverty, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 4), I, p. 560.
36. Ferishtah, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 6) I, p. 58.

The numbers converted between 1193, when the rule of the Turkish Sultanate was established at Delhi, and 1210, when Qutbuddin Aibak died, and the immigrant Muslims were about two and a half lakhs—in the following order :

*Immigrations*

1,200 soldiers left by Shihabuddin at Bhatinda, 1190-91.
50,000 remained with Aibak after Ghori left, 1193-4.
10,000 (?) Immigrants—adventurers, refugees, Mashaikh, etc.

*Conversions*

5,000 (?) At Ajmer—in all the three campaigns.
5,000 (?) in Kol, 1194.
20,000 When Raja Bhim was attacked, 1195.
50,000 In Kalinjar, 1202.
100,000 Khokhars and Himalayan foothill tribes.
10,000 (?) In Bihar

251,200 Total

To this may be added the Muslims—converted, migrated and procreated—since the days of Mahmud of Ghazni in the Punjab, U.P., Gujarat and the South. If this number may be taken to be a hundred thousand, the total number of Muslims around A.D. 1200 was in all probability not more than three to four hundred thousand. The total population of India in that year has been estimated at 190 million. The ratio of Muslims to the total population in A.D. 1200 would have been about 1 : 415, or .21 per cent.

# X

## A. D. 1200-1400

Muslim population in India grew with the establishment and expansion of Turkish rule in Hindustan. Its rise was due mainly to the immigration of Muslims from abroad and conversion of Hindus to Islam. There were Muslim losses also, in wars, famines, and through reconversions, and there was the growth of Muslim numbers through natural procreation in years and decades. A study of all these processes will help in estimating the growth of Muslim population between A.D. 1200 and 1400.

*Muslim Immigration*

In the armies of Turkish conquerors Muslims of many tribes like Khitai, Qara-Khitai, Qipchaqi, Garji and Ilbari came to India,[1] and they stayed on here. Fakhruddin Mubarak writes that the army of Qutbuddin Aibak was composed of Turks, Gheris, Khurasanis and Khaljis.[2] Thus in the early years of Turkish conquest immigrant soldiers comprised an important agency contributing to the growth of Muslim population in India.

Also with the establishment of Muslim rule, batches of other types of Muslims began to arrive in Hindustan from Central Asia, Persia, African Muslim countries, and what is now called Afghani-

1. Minhaj Sraj, *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), pp. 238, 242, 247, 249, 256, 258, 262, 276, 281.
2. *Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah*, ed. Sir Denison Ross, (London, 1927), p. 33.

stan. India was rich and fertile as compared with their own lands, and with the extension of Muslim political power, many immigrant-soldiers and traders, saints and scholars, political refugees and adventurers, and even musicians, jesters and jugglers—attracted by the "abundance of wealth in cash and kind"—began to flock to India.[3] Only a few instances of such immigration may be mentioned. Minhaj Siraj says that people from Persia (and adjoining countries) came to India in "various capacities".[4] A great scholar of Iltutmish's reign was Amir Ruhani; he had come from Bukhara to Delhi during Chingiz's upheaval.[5] Qazi Hamid-ud-din Nagori had also come from abroad.[6] Fakhr-ul-Mulk Isami, who had been vazir at Baghdad for thirty years but then had suffered some disappointment, arrived in India and was appointed vazir by Iltutmish.[7] Nuruddin Muhammad Ufi, the author of *Jama-ul-Hikayat* had also come to Delhi during Iltutmish's reign.[8] Their important positions in India as well as the influence of the Abyssinian slave Yaqut at the court of Raziyah shows the presence of all types of foreign Muslims in India.

During the reign of Iltutmish, the Khwarizmi prince Jalaluddin Mangbarani fleeing before Chingiz escaped into India with 10,000 *followers (1221). Even after his return (1224), some of his followers* would have stayed on here[9]. Because of the Mongol upheaval, again, in the court of Iltutmish there arrived twentyfive princes with their retinues from Iraq, Khurasan and Mawaraun Nahr.[10] During the reign of Sultan Balban fifteen more refugee princes arrived from Turkistan, Mawaraun Nahr, Khurasan, Iraq, Azarbijan, Persia, Rum and Sham.[11] It appears that each came with a large number of followers because Balban allotted for their residence a locality (*mohalla*) each.[12] These followers comprised masters of pen and of

3. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, p. 84. Also p. 66.
4. Minhaj, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), pp. 157-60
5. Ferishtah, *op. cit*, (II, n. 6), p. 66.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
7. *Ibid*, p. 67.
8. *Loc. cit.*
9. A.B.M. Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), pp. 95, 97.
10. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, p. 73.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 75. Also Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), p. 272.
12. Thus fifteen *mohallas* (localities) were colonized in Delhi. These were named as Abbasi, Sanjari, Khwarizm Shahi, Delmi, Alvi, Atabaki, Ghori,

sword, scholars and *mashaikh*, reciters and musicians. The fact that Balban had garrisoned the forts of Gopalgir, Kampil, Patiali, Bhojpur and Jalali with thousands of Afghan troops,[12] and in the royal procession 500 Sistani, Ghori, Samarqandi and Arab soldiers with drawn swords used to march by his side, indicates that a large number of foreigners had come to India during his reign.

The Mongols, who had sent central and west Asian refugees fleeing into India, themselves occasionally arrived as invaders and stayed on in the country. Some also came, as in 1244, from the eastern passes of Tibet into Bengal.[14] A large number of Mongols who had arrived with large armies and sought service under Balban entered into relationships with Muslim nobles.[15] In 1291, the Mongol invader Alghu "with 4,000 Mongols and their families", made India his home.[16] The colony of these neo-Muslims came to be called Mughalpura. Under Alauddin Khalji also many Mongol captives embraced Islam and settled down in India. According to Ziyauddin Barani, many needy persons from Khurasan, Iraq, Mawaraun Nahr, Khwarizm, Sistan, Herat, and Damascus came to Hindustan to receive bounty from Muhammad Tughlaq.[17] Ibn Battuta says that no new comer from Khurasan was allowed to enter into Indian territory unless he came with the express intent of staying in Hindustan. Battuta was himself required to write a bond to that effect.[18] Under Muhammad bin Tughlaq especially, foreigners are said to have been preferred to Indian Muslims on important posts and their immigration encouraged.[19] Foreign slaves, male and female, too arrived from countries as far off as China and Abyssinia.

Then there is the fact of foreign traders and merchants coming to India in large numbers. They came both by land and by sea. Horse traders in particular came from the north-western side to Sind, Gujarat, Punjab and U.P., Some also came through the eastern

Chingezi, Rumi, Sunguri, Yamani, Mosuli, Samarqandi, Kashgari, and Khitai.
Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (I, n. 6), I, p. 75.
13. Ziyauddin Barani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 11), pp. 57-58.
14. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, p. 70.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
16. Barani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 11), p. 218. Isami, *op. cit.* (II, n. 31), pp. 205-06.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 462
18. Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I, n. 1), pp. 14-15.
19. Yahya Sarhindi, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), pp. 107-108.

Passes into Bengal leading to the establishment of an Arab traders' colony in Chittagong.[20] It is said that the ancestors of Lodi rulers in India (1451-1526) were horsedealers.[21] We hear a little later that the best houses in Delhi belonged to the Khurasani merchants,[22] which shows that they had built permanent homes in India. Such was the position in North India. In the South, the coastal towns like Calicut, Cochin, and Quilon, to mention only a few, were hub of international trade. There were Muslim colonies on the west coast from very early times. Indigenous converts added to the numerical strength of foreign Muslims. How quickly their numbers swelled may be inferred from the fact that when, early in the fourteenth century, Malik Kafur marched into Maabar (Malabar), about 20,000 Musalmans were found fighting on the side of the south Indian Hindus.[23] During the thirteenth century Muslim territorial expansion was rather restricted. Till the very end of the century Muslim rule could not extend beyond what it had been by 1206. In the fourteenth century, however, Muslims arms penetrated into the south also encouraging Muslim immigration. With the founding of the Bahmani kingdom, in the middle of the fourteenth century, the avenues of Muslim employment increased still further and so also their immigration.

What could be the quantum of this immigration ? It is true that ever since the inception of Muslim rule in India we come across references to Abyssinians (Habshis), Arabs, Afghans, Mongols, Persians, people from Khurasan, Rum and Sham, and of course the Turks, as constantly arriving or living in Hindustan. It is also true that the whole atmosphere of the courts of the Turkish sultans was Islamic ; all high officers were Muslim. Their repeated mention in the chronicles creates the impression that they were flooding the country. But repeated references to foreign Muslim elements may not have been due so much to their large numbers as to the important positions they held. It appears that the number of actual immigrants could not have been large. A somewhat detailed discussion on this point will follow later on.

20. Abdul Karim, *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Pakistan (Dacca, 1959), p. 147.
21. Lal, *Twilight*, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 5), p. 132.
22. Yahiya Sarhindi, *op. cit.* (II, n. 18), pp. 107-108.
23. Lal, *Khaljis*, *op. cit.* (V, n . 4), p. 250.

### Conversions during Wars

"There was never any doubt in the minds of the Muslims of their right to spread over the earth...As this could not, in the opinion of kings and warriors, be achieved without the subjugation of non-Muslims and occupation of their territory, the propagation of Islam became identical with war and conquest."[24] In simple language conquerors and rulers converted people by force. It has been seen that during the Arab invasion of Sind and the expeditions of Mahmud of Ghazni, defeated rulers, garrisons of captured forts, and civilian population were sometimes forced to accept Islam. Turkish rule in Hindustan was established in the teeth of Rajput opposition and the process of war and conversion never ceased. Malik Kafur, the general of Alauddin Khalji, gave the Raja of Dwarsamudra a choice between Islam, death or payment of a huge indemnity.[25] But under Muhammad bin Tughlaq there is greater insistence on the vanquished Hindu princes to embrace Islam. The most glaring example of this is that during the Warangal campaign all the eleven sons of the Raja of Kampila were made Muslims. Muhammad Tughlaq converted many people in this fashion. When Firoz Tughlaq invaded Jajnagar (Orissa), he captured the son of the Rai of Sikhar, converted him to Islam and gave him the name of Shakr Khan.[26]

Ordinarily, captivity for a Rajput was out of the question : his sense of honour and the dire penishments with which he was visited in case of captivity,[27] excluded any attempt on his part to save his life by surrender. He either died on the field of battle or escaped. But in war civilians and non-combatants could easily be taken. Kafur Hazardinari from Gujarat or Hasan (Khusrau Khan) from Malwa would not have been captured alone. They rose into prominence and therefore the circumstances of their enslavement and conversion are known. Large numbers became Musalmans in this way. Muslim rulers were keen to obtain captives in war and convert them. During warfare it was still more easy to enslave women and children. It was almost a matter of policy with the Turkish rulers and their commanders, from the very start of Muslim rule, to capture and

24. M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967), pp. 67-68.
25. Lal, *Khalji*, *op. cit.* (V, n. 4), p. 247.
26. Yahiya, *op. cit.* (II, 18), p. 129. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, 6), I, p. 147.
27. Alberuni, *op. cit.* (IV, n. 2), II, pp. 162-163

convert or disperse and destory the male population, and carry into slavery women and children. Ibn-ul Asir says that Qutbuddin Aibak made 'war against the provinces of Hind.....He killed many, and returned home with prisoners and booty.'[28] In Banaras, according to Ibn-ul Asir, Shihabuddin's slaughter of the Hindus was immense, none was spared exeept women and children".[29] No wonder that slaves began to fill the household of every Turk from the very inception of Muslim rule in Hindustan. Fakhre Mudabbir informs us that as a result of the Turkish aehievements under Muhammad Ghori and Qutbuddin Aibak, 'even a poor householder (or soldier) who did not possess a single slave (before) became the owner of numerous slaves.....'[30]

In 1231 Sultan Iltutmish attaeked Gwalior, and 'captured a large number of slaves'.[31] Minhaj Siraj Jurjani writes that 'his (Balban's) taking of captives, and his capture of the dependents of the great Ranas cannot be recounted."[32] Talking of his war in Avadh against Trailokyavarman of the Chandela dynasty (Dalaki wa Malaki of Minhaj), the chronieler says : 'All the infidel's wives, sons and dependents...and children . fell into the hands of the victors.'[33] In 1253 in his campaign against Ranthambhor also Balban appears to have captured many prisoners.[34] In 1259, in an attack on Hariyana (the Shiwalik hills), many women and children were enslaved.[35] Twice Balban led expeditions against Kampil, Patiali, and Bhojpur, and in the process captured a large number of women and children. In Katehar he ordered a general massacre of the male population of over eight years of age and earried away women and children.[36]

The process of enslavement during war went on under the Khaljis and the Tughlaqs. Alauddin had 50,000 slaves[37] some of

28. *Kamil-ut-Tawarikh, op. cit* (II, n.10), p. 250.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 251.
30. *Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 20 has *"jauq jauq ghulam har jins"*,
31. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n 6), I, p. 66. Also Minhaj, *op cit.* (V, n. 2), p. 175.
32. Minhaj, E and D, II, p. 348.
33. *Ibid.*, 367. Also Ferishtah, I, 71.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 371.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 380-81.
36. Barani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 11), p. 59. Ferishtah, I, p. 77.
37. Afif, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), p. 272.

whom were mere boys,[38] and surely many captured during war. Firoz Tughlaq had issued an order that whichever places were sacked, in them the captives should be sorted out and the best ones (fit for service with the Sultan) should be forwarded to the court.[39] Soon he was enabled to collect 180,000 slaves.[40] Ziyauddin Barani's description of the Slave Market in Delhi (such markets were there in other places also) during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, shows that fresh batches of slaves were constantly replenishing them.[41]

Muhammad bin Tughlaq became notorious for enslaving women, and his reputation in this regard spread far and wide, so that Shihabuddin Ahmad Abbas writes about him thus: "The Sultan never ceases to show the greatest zeal in making war upon the infidels... Everyday thousands of slaves are sold at a very low price, so great is the number of prisoners."[42] Ibn Battuta's eye-witness account of the Sultan's arranging the enslaved girls' marriages with Muslims on a large scale on the occasion of the two Ids. confirms the statement of Abbas.[43] Such was their influx that Ibn Battuta writes: "At (one) time there arrived in Delhi some female infidel capitives. ten of whom the Vazir sent to me. I gave one of them to the man who had brought them to me, but he was not satisfied. My companion took three young girls, and I do not know what happened to the rest."[44] Thousands of non-Muslim

38. Barani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 11), p. 318. Lal, *Khaljis*, *op. cit.* (V, n. 4), pp. 214-15.
39. Afif, *op cit.* (II, n. 15), p. 267.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
41. Barani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 11), pp. 314-15.
42. *Masalik-ul-Absar*, *op. cit.* (II, n. 5), p. 580.
43. "First of all, daughters of Kafir (Hindu) Rajas captured during the course of the year, come and sing and dance. Thereafter they are bestowed upon Amirs and important foreigners. After this daughters of other Kafirs dance and sing...the Sultan gives them to his brothers, relatives, sons of Maliks etc. On the second day the *durbar* is held in a similar fashion after Asr. Female singers are brought out..... the Sultan distributes them among the Mamelukes Amirs. On the third day relatives of the Sultan are married and they are given rewards. On the sixth day male and female slaves are married. On the seventh day he (the Sultan) gives charities with great liberality".
Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I, n. 1), p. 63. Hindi translation by A.A. Rizvi in *Tughlaq Kalin Bharat*, Part I, Aligarh, 1956, p. 189.
44. Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I, n. 1), p. 123.

women[45] were captured in the minor yearly campaigns[46] of Firoz Tughlaq, and under him the Id celebrations were held on lines similar to those of his predecessor.[47] In short the inflow of such captives never ceased, and it need hardly be stated that in the hands of their Muslim masters the slaves, whether captured or purchased, became Musalman sooner or later.

The numbers thus captured and converted during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries cannot be ascertained. But from the details given by the chroniclers, it appears that enslavement during war brought the largest number of converts and, as years passed by, they and their progeny seem to have formed the bulk of the Muslim population. Only two instances may suffice to show how this agency contributed to the rapid rise of Muslim numbers. Bashir Sultani was originally a Hindu Slave. He converted to Islam and became an important nobelman (Imadul Mulk) under Firoz Tughlaq. He purchased 4,000 slaves.[48] Later on they were all manumitted and married, and would have produced other thousands of Muslims in a single generation. Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul too was originally a Hindu. He converted, became Prime Minister, and collected 2,000 women in his harem. How many slaves he had is not known, but for such a high dignitary's household of two thousand, at least a few thousand slaves would have been required. The point to note is that all these women and slaves, if not originally Muslim, would have embraced Islam in course of time.

### Proselytizing Activity of the Government

It was not during expeditions and wars alone that conversions were effected. For increasing the number of their co-religionists, Muslim rulers made free use of the governmental machinery in peace time. This was done not only by the sultans of Delhi, but by all Muslim rulers—of Bengal, Kashmir, the Deccan—wherever Muslim rule was established. One of the measures, which helped raise Muslim numbers was patronage to foreign Muslims—scholars, administrators, mashaikh, soldiers, adventurers—indeed Muslims of

45. Afif, *op. cit.* (11, n. 15), p. 265 has "*chandin hazar aurat mustaurat va mukhdarat musalmanan nasib mikardand*". Also see pp. 119-20.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 360.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

almost any sort. This resulted in Muslim immigration on a large scale. Another step was the building and maintenance of mosques, Khanqahs and Sarais from government funds. These mosques, besides being houses of worship and centres of Islamic learning, often provided asylum to the needy and the indigent, who could be potential converts. Sometimes conquests were undertaken with a "missionary" motive.[49] Some rulers like Sikandar Butshikan of Kashmir (1394-1417) just compelled their subjects to embrace Islam.[50]

But an important and effective means of obtaining converts was economic temptation or pressure. Ibn Battuta writes that Sultan Qutbuddin Mubark Shah Khalji (1316-1320) used to encourage Hindus to accept Islam by presenting a convert with a robe of honour and a gold ornament.[51] The *Banshavaliri* of Satya Krishna Biswas relates that in Bengal the landlords and Rajas who could not deposit land revenue by a certain date had to convert to Muhammadanism.[52] Under Firoz Tughlaq (1351-88) the state openly became an agency of conversion. Shams Siraj Afif says that he ordered his Amils to convert Hindus to Islam.[53] Firoz Tughlaq himself writes, that he rescinded the Jiziyah to lure people to become Mahammadans, and this measure brought him groups of converts "day by day from every quarter."[54]

Contemporary sources, however, do not supply any figures of the converted in this way. But the number of converts was perhaps not small. Ibn Battuta's assertion that Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah's system of proselytization provided a convenient handle to his enemies to murder him by introducing into the palace a large number of Hindus declaring them to be potential converts, shows that Qutbuddin was accustomed to converting large numbers.[55]

49. *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, English trs. by Mohammad Habib under the title of *Campaigns of Alauddin Khilji* (Bombay, 1931), p. 80.
50. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), II, p. 341.
51. Ibn Battutah, *Voyages*, ed. C. Defremery and B.R. Sanguinetti (Paris, 1857), III, pp. 197-98. Also Lal, *Khalji*, *op. cit.* (V, n. 4), p. 305.
52. Satya Krishna Biswas, *Banshavaliri* (Bengali), Calcutta, 1926, pp. 6-10.
53. Afif, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), pp. 268-69.
Also Ishwari Prasad, *Qaraunah Turks*, *op. cit.* (V, n. 17), p. 331.
54. *Futuhat-i-Firoz Shahi* of Firoz Tughlaq, E and D, III, p. 386.
55. Lal, *Khalji*, *op. cit.* (V, n. 4), p. 305. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, p. 127.

Voluntary Conversions

Side by side the efforts of the Muslim ruling classes was the proselytizing activity of the Sufi Mashaikh. It is, however, not known to what extent the Sufis were interested in the work of conversion, and this problem will be taken up in some detail at a later stage. Here it would suffice to point out that not many reliable references to their proselytizing activity are available in genuine hagiogical works. They may have helped those who showed any inclination to become Muslims. Occasionally they resorted to force also to convert people.[56]

Closely related to the work of missionaries is the question of voluntary conversions. There are some references in the chronicles about individual Hindus accepting Islam because of dissatisfaction with their own faith. Al Biladuri mentions such a case. "The son of (a) king fell sick, and he desired the ministers of the temple to pray to the idol for the recovery of his son...But...the youth died. Then the king attacked the temple, destroyed...the idol, and slew the ministers. He afterwards invited a party of Muhammadan traders who made known to him the unity of God...and (he) became a Musalman."[57] *Tarikh-i-Tahiri* mentions the case of the younger brother of Dalu Rai, the ruler of Sind, who, of his own accord, became a Musalman and got married at Mecca.[58] Similarly one hoping through conversion to obtain his object of love, succession to property, etc. would have voluntarily embraced Islam. Some, whose relatives had converted but who were not prepared to cut themselves off from them, too, would have followed suit. These are solid assumptions, often backed by references in Persian chronicles.

The 'groups' which converted to get relief from the Jiziyah, referred to by Firoz Tughlaq, obviously belonged to the poor, economically vulnerable sections. The few caste groups which converted to Islam did so because of professional and vocational compulsions. *Such conversions took place mostly in urban areas,*

56. For instance Raju Qallal's efforts to convert Nahawan, the Darogha of Uchch; the later's resistance and murder.
Jamali, *Siyar-ul-Arifin* (Delhi, 1311 H), pp. 159-60. Also Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), II, pp. 417-18.
Also See K.R. Qanungo, *Historical Essay* (Agra, 1968), p. 151 for proselytizing efforts of the militant mashaikh in Bengal.

57. Biladuri, *Futuh-ul-Buldan, op. cit.* (VIII, n. 4), pp. 129-30.

58. E and D, I, pp. 258-59.

especially among artisans, mechanics, handicraftsmen. The Zamorin ordered some fishermen of Malabar to convert to Islam in order to man his warships.[59] Some urban tailors also converted. The interdependence of cotton-carders, weavers (dhunia, julaha) and tailors would have encouraged the former to embrance Islam. Beggars accepting cooked food from Muslims would have become Musalmans automatically. Butchers would have become Musalmans because their vocation found a ready and sympathetic clientele among Muhammedans.

Muslim Losses

Side by side the rise in Muslim numbers through immigration and conversion, there was decimation of Muslim population also. Muslim rulers had to struggle hard to preserve and expand their territory not only against Hindu Rajas but also against rebel Muslim governors and adventurers. There were wars against Hindu rulers for extension of Muslim political power and there were wars of succession and military campaigns against defiant Muslim governors. Withal foreign invaders had to be kept in check. All these processes entailed loss of Muslim lives.

A glance at a few historical events can give an idea of this loss. During the first year of their conquest the Muslims had captured Ajmer, Hansi, Kuhram, Sarsuti, Baran, Meerut, Kol and Ranthambhor. But in 1193 the Chauhan prince Hariraja, "collected a Rajput force and besieged Ranthambhor where, earlier in the year, Aibak had placed a garrison under Qivam-ul-Mulk."[60] The Chauhans also occupied Ajmer. In 1194 Aibak is stated to have crossed the Jumna a second time to capture Kol, but the next year again he had to proceed to the relief of its garrison. On his return to Delhi in 1195 "news arrived of fresh trouble in Ajmer," which was again besieged by the Rajputs in 1195 and Aibak had to fight hard for its relief; and it could be saved only by the timely arrival of reinforcements from Ghazni.[61] But, a little later, in Ghazni itself Yaldoz was creating trouble for the Delhi Sultan. Such troubles recurred constantly; as a consequence of which there was loss of Muslim numbers. The best instances of such losses are found in the east where Bakhtiyar Khalji's ambition to conquer "Tibet and China"

59. Titus, *op. cit.* (IX, n. 11), p. 39.
60. Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), p. 63. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 22.
61. Habibullah, pp. 64-67.

destroyed his whole army,[62] or in the west where a Hindu king, after defeating a Muslim army shortly after the initial Turkish conquest, openly regarded himself as restoring to India its original name of *Aryavarta* by killing off the *mlechchhas*.[63]

Iltutmish's accession (1210) was resisted by Delhi Jandars, and in the battle he "put most of their horsemen" to the sword. His wars with Yaldoz and Qubaicha again must have meant depletion of Muslim numbers (fighting on both sides) continually. In his attack on Malwa—Bhilsa, Ujjain etc.—again some Muslim soldiers would have perished. During his attack on Nagda, the capital of the Guhilots, he was driven away by its ruler Kshetra Singh, with heavy losses. But the most interesting fact is that Kalinjar, Gwalior, Ranthambhor and even Badaon and Kanauj, which had been captured earlier, had to be reconquered by him.[64] Obviously the Muslim garrisons in these places had been destroyed by the Rajputs. Minhaj Siraj makes mention of a Hindu Raja of Avadh, Bartu (?) by name "under whose hands and sword [in 1226] more than 120,000 Musalmans had received martyrdom."[65] The figure may be inflated, but the fact is important. Raziyah's rule was full of bloodshed. Armies of Delhi, Lahore, Bhatinda and Sirhind were involved in war. *Karmatians had created trouble in Iltutmish's reign; in Raziyah's* reign a thousand of them openly attacked the Muslims in the Jama Masjid, killed many of them and then were themselves killed. Ranthambhor had once again to be evacuated during her reign. Since perhaps during the period of the early sultans there was not much Indianization of the army, the losses in war may have been mainly of Muslims. Alauddin Masud Shah had acquired the habit of seizing and killing his nobles[66] (and certainly other Muslims too). In Nasiruddin's reign two attempts on Ranthambhor (1248, 1259) seem to have been made without success[67] but surely entailing loss of Muslim soldiers. In wars in Avadh, Narwar, Gwalior, Chanderi, Malwa etc., again, many Muslims would have lost their lives.

62. Minhaj, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2) pp. 152-57.
63. R. C. Majumdar, "Study of Indian History" in *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1957, p. 150.
64. Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), pp. 100-104.
65. Minhaj, E and D, II, p. 329. Also D. C. Ganguly in *The Struggle for Empire*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (Bombay), p. 55.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 345.
67. Minhaj, E and D, II pp. 349, 368-69.

Add to these losses the Mongol killings in India. In 1241 the Mongols under Bahadur Tair captured Lahore, "slaughtered the Muhammadans and made their dependents captive".[68] Hasan Qarlugh wrested Multan in 1245 and "the whole of Sindh was lost to the Mongols."[69] It was recovered by Ulugh Khan (Balban) but the next year the Mongols[70] again arrived under Sali Bahadur. By 1254, the territory up to and including Lahore had been taken by them. During Balban's reign the Mongol pressure increased all the more. His son, the Prince Martyr, lost his life fighting them. So great was the loss on this occasion, that according to Amir Khusrau, "in Multan, in every house there was some dead to be wept for."[71] Vigorous Mongol attacks[72] continued right up to the first decade of the fourteenth century ; and this alone can give an idea of the losses suffered by Muslim (and Hindu) population.

Meanwhile fighting at home never ceased. Balban did not mount any major attacks on neighbouring rulers, but even so his campaigns against the rebellious Bengal and Mewat would have only added to the depletion of Muslim numbers. Barani says that the Mewatis had killed a hundred thousand of his personal troops.[73] Jalaluddin Khalji's accession was attended by loss of Muslim lives. What Ranthambhor meant to him (and had surely meant to his predecessors too), is candidly confessed by him. He had marched to it in 1291, but recoiled from attacking it because he feared that its capture would entail great loss of Muslim lives.[74] With murdering Mongols he purchased peace. Although Alauddin Khalji rarely suffered defeat, yet there is no doubt that Muslim soldiers lost their lives in good numbers in the Bengal campaign, at Ranthambhor and Chittor and against the recurring terrific Mongol invasions.[75] The rebellions of Ikat Khan, Haji Maula and Umar and Mangu Khan too would have killed many Muslims. The massacres of neo-Muslims under Balban and Alauddin (30,000 under Alauddin only) would have added to the depreciation of Muslim numbers, and so

68. *Ibid*, 340-41.
69. Habibullah, *op. cit.* (V, n. 2), p. 213
70. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
71. Wahid Mirza, *Life and Works of Amir Khusrau* (Calcutta, 1935), p. 63.
72. Habibullah, *op. cit.*, (V, n. 2) pp. 216-25.
73. Barani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 11), p. 57.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
75. Lal, *Khaljis, op. cit.* (V, n. 4), p. 144, n. 66.

also in Ghayasuddin Tughlaq's expeditions to Warangal, Jajnagar, Tirhut, and Bengal.

Muslim blood was shed most recklessly under Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Many of his schemes were costly in terms of human life. In the 'Qarachal' venture 100,000 soldiers are said to have perished. Many of these, if not all, would have been Muslims. A modern historian recounts twenty-two rebellions during his reign, twenty of which were of Muslim nobles or governors, and the details point to loss of Muslim lives on both sides, rebel as well as royalist.[76] During the transfer of the capital, according to the same scholar, it were mainly Muslims who were asked to go from Delhi to Devagiri, and it is they who suffered and died in the exodus.[77] Ibn Battuta and Ferishtah credit this Sultan with a love for shedding blood. Not a little of this blood was Muslim.

Under Muhammad Tughlaq's successor Firoz Tughlaq, Shams Siraj Afif noticed a demographic recovery.[78] When he wrote about it, he was naturally thinking in terms of his co-religionists also. But after Firoz's death civil wars and other disorders began to decimate Muslim numbers. Most of his 180,000 slaves were done away with by his son Nasiruddin Muhammad Shah.[79] Muhammad Bihamad Khani gives vivid details of how with the weakening of the Sultanate, Muslim forces were repeatedly defeated and destroyed by even local rulers like Adharan and Sumer, and how Muslims were ousted from Chandwar, Bhongaon, Bercha, Kalpi and many other places, of course with great losses in men.[80] As the fourteenth century closed, Timur arrived to kill indiscriminately, not only Hindus but also Muslims.[81] Muslim numbers would also have contributed their share to famines, pestilences etc. commonly recurring in India.

### Natural Growth of Muslim Population

These contradictory scenes in Muslim demography apart, about one thing one can be sure. While the overall demographic

76. Mahdi Husain, *op. cit.* (V, n. 8), pp. 195-257.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-64, esp. 149.
78. See pp. 48-49 above.
79. *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, 425b, Trs. Rizvi, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 2), p. 233.
80. *Ibid.*, fols. 418b-419b, and corresponding pp. 228-29 in Rizvi.
81. Lal, *Twilight, op. cit.* (VI, n. 5), pp. 17-43, 320.

trend of India showed, a decline, the Muslim population showed only an upward tendency. It is true that many a time statistical victories through conversions were scored off by losses in wars, yet an overall rise in Muslim population—sometimes slow, at others accelerated—is clearly discernible.

The rise seems to be slow between 1200 and 1300, and rapid between 1300 to 1400. Historical facts vouch for this behaviour. Up to the end of the thirteenth century, governmental effort towards proselytization is hesitant and even lukewarm.[82] Iltutmish, Balban and Alauddin Khalji were practical administrators, and but for the captives and converts obtained by them during wars, they did not act as royal missionaries. Besides, with the Hindus politically strongly entrenched right up to the end of the thirteenth century, Muslim proselytizing activity had to be cautious.[83] Alauddin subdued the major Hindu powers. With their submission and extension of Muslim political power to most parts of the country Hindu vulnerability to proselytization increased. Therefore, between 1300 to 1400, under Qutubuddin Mubarak, Muhammad and Firoz Tughlaq, conversions were effected at an accelerated pace, and immigrants also arrived in larger numbers.

In brief till about the end of the thirteenth century, Muslims in India were only like 'salt in a large dish'. The main reason for this phenomenon was that during the whole century there was little Muslim territorial expansion. To what had been acquired by 1206, nothing substantial was added till about 1300, and all the energies of the Sultanate were concentrated on preserving their acquisitions rather expanding territorially. Such a situation was discouraging both to proselytization and even immigration. Even in the capital city of Delhi and its environs the Muslims were

82. Barani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 11), pp. 42-44.

83. When some Ulema approached Iltutmish and suggested to him to confront the Hindus with a choice between Islam and death, Nizam-ul-Mulk Junaidi, the Wazir, replied: "But at the moment in India... the Muslims are so few that they are like salt (in a large dish). If the above orders are to be applied...the Hindus might combine...and the Muslims would be too few in number to suppress (them). However, after a few years when in the Capital and in the regions and the small towns, the Muslims are well established and the troops are larger, it will be possible to give Hindus, the choice of 'death' or 'Islam'."

Ziyauddin Barani, *Sona-i-Muhemmadi*, Medieval India Quarterly, I, Pt. III, pp. 100-105.

few, a fact which probably made Barani suffer from an incurable Hindu-phobia.[84] From the time of Alauddin Khalji, however, Muslim population in India began to grow a little faster due to the spreading of the Muslim rule to almost the whole of India after 1300, and it is rightly claimed that the establishment of the Vijayanagar Empire in the South was effected with a view to preserve Hindusim from the onslaughts of Islam. But contemporaneously the Bahmani kingdom of the South was also founded and it took to proselytising work usual with a Muslim regime.

By the close of the fourteenth century, the situation was like this. Kashmir's introduction to Islam had started since the days of Mahmud of Ghazni. In 1315, one Shah Mirza arrived from Swat, helped oust the ruling Hindu dynasty and himself ascended the throne in 1346. But in Kashmir, till the coming of Timur at the end of the fourteenth century,[85] the population of Muslims was insignificant. Sind and Punjab were being effectively Islamised by rulers and Mongol invaders. In Gujarat, Deccan and Malwa also, because of the campaigns of local Muslim rulers against Hindu chiefs, the number of Muslims had risen. By the last years of the century, Muslim population of Delhi and its adjoining regions also went up, a fact which prompted Afif to write "from the *qasba of* Indrapat (present Indraprastha Estate) to the Kaushik-i-Shikar (present Delhi University area), five *kos* apart all the land was occupied.....There were eight public mosques, and one private mosque...The public mosques were each large enough to accommodate 10,000 suppliants".[86] This clearly indicates a fairly large Muslim population in the capital city.

There is yet another, though indirect and not unimpeachable, evidence for this rise. Alauddin had abolished the jagir system, lest local officials should turn contumacious. But by the time of Firoz the number of dependable Muslims (or Muslims of a few

84. Barani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 11), pp. 41-42, 44 and 216-17. Similar sentiments are expressed on pp. 72-75.

85. When Father Xavier and Brother Benedict went to Kashmir with Akbar this is what they learnt : "In antiquity this land was inhabited by gentiles, but in the 1300's it was invaded by the Moors, possibly a reference to Timur, and since then the majority of the people accept Islam".
Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), I, p 467. He writes on the authority of L. Guzman, *Historia de las missiones*...(Alcala, 1601), pp. 267-68.

86. Afif, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), p. 135.

generations) had increased, and he could safely entrust jagirs to them. "and during the forty years of his reign he devoted himself to generosity and the benefit of Musalmans, by distributing villages and lands among his followers" in lieu of salary.[87]

**Estimate of Muslim population in A.D. 1400**

So, between A.D. 1200 and 1400 and especially in the fourteenth century, Muslim population had grown at an accelerated pace. The agencies which contributed to this growth are known. Historical facts giving an idea of this rise too are on record. But the quantum or percentage of rise during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is not possible to estimate with any amount of accuracy for want of specific data. However, a fair idea—only a fair idea—may be obtained by taking recourse to the same old but well-tried method of proceeding from the known to the unknown.

The decadal census figures from 1881 to 1941 show a constant rise in Muslim numbers. This is a feature common with medieval times, and the pattern of modern Muslim demography, seen in Table 7,

**Table 7**

*Showing the rate of rise of Muslim Population during* 1881-1941

| Year of the Census | Number of[88] Muslims in 000's | %age to[89] total population calculated by J. M. Datta | Inter-Censal difference | %age calculation[90] by K. Davis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1881 | 49,953 | 19.74 | — | 19.97 |
| 1891 | 57,068 | 19.96 | +0.22 | 20.41 |
| 1901 | 62,119 | 21.22 | +1.26 | 21.88 |
| 1911 | 67,835 | 21.26 | +0.04 | 22.39 |
| 1921 | 71,005 | 21.74 | +0.48 | 23.23 |
| 1931 | 79,306 | 22.16 | +0.42 | 23.49 |
| 1941 | 94,447 | 23.81 | +1.65 | 24.28 |

87. Afif, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), p. 95.
88. Based on the figures of K. Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 193.
89. J.M. Datta, "Proportion of Mahammadans in India Through Centuries", in *Modern Review*, *op. cit.* (I, n.10), p. 33.
90. K. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

may help in estimating the rate of rise in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries also.

Now, although the growth of Muslim numbers during these sixty years (1881-1941) is continuous, the percentage of rise is not uniform. It indeed varies from 0.04% between 1901 and 1911 to 1.65 between 1931 to 1941. But, as the Table above shows, Muslim population in India was almost doubled in sixty years time from 49.9 million to 94.5 between 1881 and 1941. If in modern times the Muslim numbers rose by a hundred per cent in a little over sixty years, could they have risen at the same rate during the two centuries under review? If so, then the numbers between 1200 and 1400 should have become double in sixty to seventy years on an average, the restrained growth of the thirteenth being made up by the accelerated rise in the fourteenth century. It is true that the period of 1881 to 1941 was of peace in India. Famine and pestilence and such like calamities were there no doubt, but there were no wars as such in India during this period. In medieval times there were recurring famines and constant wars. But the Muslims, confined mostly to urban areas, would have been better protected by governmental effort against the ravages of famine. The wars were generally of Hindu resistance and Muslim expansion. It is clear from a study of medieval Indian history that more Hindus died in battle than Muslims. Not only the medieval chroniclers say so but also because Hindus generally lost and the Muslims in course of time became masters of almost the whole country. The rise in Muslim numbers at least was not affected by these wars because any loss in battles was more than made up by the number of captives who used to be converted and also by replenishment through Muslim immigration. Thus it may not be unreasonable to suppose that during these two centuries, in the course of sixty to seventy years, the number of Muslims used to become double.

It has been estimated earlier that there were about four hundred thousand Muslims in India in A.D. 1200. If their numbers became double in sixty to seventy years, they would have been about 3.2 million in 1400. The total population of India in 1400 has been estimated at 170 million. The Muslims would have been about 1.8 per cent of the total population with 50 to 53 Hindus to one Muslim.

# XI

## A. D. 1400-1600

A year before the dawn of the fifteenth century, Timur had claimed to have invaded Hindustan to destroy its infidels and idolators.[1] In the year 1400 India was predominantly Hindu; Muslims comprised less than 2 per cent of the population. The country south of the Krishna River right up to Cape Camorin formed the Vijayanagar empire and it was Hindu. On the west coast, the strip between Goa in the south to Chaul and (future) Bombay in the north was in the hands of independent Hindu rulers. In the Bahmani kingdom conversions and immigration were swelling Muslim numbers. But the whole of Central India with Rajasthan to the west and Gondwana to the east was Hindu. East U.P., Bihar and Orissa were also Hindu. Only in Baluchistan, portion of the Punjab west of the River Ravi, Sind and Bengal there were good number of Muslims, but there too the Hindus were in majority. In the heart of the Sultanate—the eastern Punjab, Delhi and its outlying regions, and western U.P.—Gujarat, and Malwa, Muslim numbers were rising but were not yet large. Timur might have made his declaration merely as a champion of Islam, and yet he was not wrong in his assessment of the proportion of Muslims in the overall population of India.

After Timur's visitation, a number of developments took place. The Sultanate was weakened and Hindu rulers in northern India gathered strength. But a number of independent Muslim-ruled

1. Sharafuddin Yazdi, *Zafar Nama*, Bib. Ind. Text (Calcutta, 1885,88), 2 Vols., II, p. 14. Also *Malfuzat-i-Timuri*, trs. in E and D, III, p. 429.

kingdoms like Gujarat, Malwa, Khandesh and Jaunpur also came into being at the expense of the weakened Sultanate. Bahmani kingdom had declared independence about the middle of the fourteenth century, and Bengal too had become virtually independent. Curiously enough the break up of the Turkish empire helped in the rapid rise of Muslim population in the fifteenth century. The Hindu rulers no doubt had gathered strength, but they had to keep on fighting against newly established Muslim kingdoms as well as the Delhi Sultanate and in the process, and whenever they were defeated, a number of their soldiers and subjects were captured and made Musalmans. Besides conversions of non-Muslims in India a large number of foreign Muslims also arrived from abroad during this period.

To keep themselves in power, the Saiyyad and Lodi Sultans of Delhi (1414-1526) went on inviting Afghans from beyond the Indus to help them stay in power. Consequently, a large number of Afghan leaders and men came into India like "ants and locusts" and helped in the rise of Muslim population.[2] All these factors helped in swelling the ranks of Muslims. In this context it is worth remembering that this period was, it appears, marked by feverish Muslim proselytization even outside India. All the European visitors to India like Nicolo Conti, Athnasius Nikitin and Santo Stefano were compelled to convert to Islam on their way to India.[3] In India itself, according to Barbosa, the sultans of Delhi had made life extremely difficult for the non-Muslims.[4] Many of the northern Hindus, especially the Yogis, "unwilling to stay under the power of the Moors", became wanderers.[5] Thus like the fourteenth century, the fifteenth also was a century of rapid rise of Muslim numbers through immigration and conversion. But in the latter half of the sixteenth century this process was by and large checked mainly due to the liberal policies of Emperor Akbar.

In this Section, therefore, we shall cursorily go through the history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with a view to guaging the quantum of conversion and immigration in the

2. So much so that Rizqullah says that under Sikandar Lodi one half of the country was assigned to the Farmulis and the other half to other Afghan tribes. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, trs. in E and D. IV, p 547.
3. Major, *India in the fifteenth Century*, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 7), Introduction.
4. Barbosa, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 17), II, p. 230.
5. *Ibid.*, I, 230-33.

various kingdoms of India, particularly those ruled by Muslim Kings, and see how Muslim numbers grew there. We shall then study the effects of Bhakti Movement, Akbar's regulations, and Portuguese Chirstians' proselytizing endeavour serving as brakes on the growth of Muslim numbers. And then we shall try to fix the proportion of Muslims in the demographic picture of India. In this study we are helped by a wider range of source materials than was available for the 1200-1400 period. Besides the writings of medieval chroniclers, a large number of accounts of foreign travellers are also available. The latter in particular come to our help in determining the proportion of Muslims in the population of India by the end of the sixteenth century.

The Sultanate—The Punjab, Sind and U.P.

During Timur's invasion the important places in the Punjab were systematically sacked. Punjab was always the first to bear the brunt of Muslim invasions directed against Hindustan, and Muslim invaders were keenly interesed in making conversions. The Ghaznavids and Ghorids had occupied it and converted many people to Islam. The Mongols had also ravaged it occasionally, and for many years at a stretch, during the reigns of Sultan Nasiruddin and Ghayasuddin Balban (1246-86), they had held the trans-Ravi and Sind regions under their sway. Under them conversions used to take place on a large scale.[6] In the second quarter of the fifteenth century the successors of Timur were holding parts of the Punjab to ransom, and rebellions of Muslim adventurers were creating anarchical conditions.[7] During this period and after, therefore, the Muslim population of the Punjab swelled considerably mainly due to proselytization. Immigration of foreign Muslims too was there on a good scale, for, as said earlier, the Saiyyad rulers, to deal effectively with foreign invaders and local rebels, and the Lodis to consolidate their position, invited large number of Afghans from across the Indus. Thus foreign immigration and campaigns helped in the rise of Muslim population in the fifteenth centutry Punjab.

Uttar Pradesh formed part of the Sultanate from its very inception. Consequently "its invasion", which brought converts, was

6. Mohammad Habib, *Some Aspects of the Foundation of the Delhi Sultanate*, Dr. K.M. Ashraf Memorial Lecture (Delhi, 1966), p. 20.
7. For the anarchical conditions in the Punjab see Lal, *Twilight*, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 5), pp. 79-100.

ruled out.[7] But in the fifteenth century, the region to the east and south of Delhi—Katchar, Doab, Bayana and Mewat—had become a problem tract under the Saiyyads, and there they contented themselves "with the ignoble but customary satisfaction of plundering the people,"[8] and obtaining some converts in the bargain. In eastern U.P. the flourishing Muslim kingdom of Jaunpur again helped in the rise of Muslim numbers. However, the regular warfare between the Lodis and the Sharqis had made both of them compete for the friendship of neighbouring Hindu Rajas and Zamindars. Such a situation ruled out any aggressive proselytizing endeavour on the part of either. But when the Sultanate once again gathered stability, the policy of proselytization was revived. Sikandar Lodi is credited with sustained activity in this regard. His intolerance in Gwalior, Mathura, Banaras and Allahabad,[9] his various "Islamic" regulations, and the fact that a "contemporary (inscription) declares him a staunch Muslim who made the foundations of Islam strong,"[10] point to large additions to Muslim demography.

By the fifteenth century Sind also contained a substantial population of Muslims, but when actually Sindhis converted to Islam in large numbers is not precisely known. However, Muslims had been growing in number there ever since the days of Mahmud of Ghazni. Like in Punjab, Ghaznavid governors had ruled over upper Sind.[11] Later on, the rule of Qubaicha, his defeat by Iltutmish, the pressure of Mongols, and the rule of the Sultanate of Delhi had all combined to Islamize northern Sind to a large extent. In Southern Sind the Sumras, a native Rajput tribe, was ousted by another Rajput tribe, the Sammas in the fourteenth century. The Sammas were Muslims and Hindus by turns,[12] but ultimately they seem to have "adopted Islam, and propagated the religion in their dominions,"[13] so that when Firoz Tughlaq invaded Thatta in 1361, he prohibited the plunder or

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-109. Also C.H.I., III, p. 207.
9. Lal, *Twilight*, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 5), pp. 77, 192.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
11. *Tuhfat-ul-Kiram*, E and D., I, pp. 341-42.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 337.
13. C.H.I. III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25) p. 501; also *Tarikh-i-Masumi*, E and D, I, pp. 224-26, and *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1845, pp. 159-60.

captivity of the people because they were Muslims.[14] But the Hindus were also there in large numbers. When Sultan Mahmud of Gujarat received "complaints from Southern Sind where Muslims were said to be persecuted by Hindus," he marched to their relief in 1470. He met many leaders of Sumras, Sodas, and Kalhoras who "told him that they were professing Muslims but knew little of their faith or its rules, and were wont to intermarry with and to live as Hindus." Mahmud invited many of them to Gujarat, "where teachers were appointed to instruct them in the faith of Islam."[15] In the first quarter of the sixteenth century, Shah Beg Arghun, driven from Qandhar by Babur, expelled Jam Firoz, the last of the Sammas, and his son Shah Husain took Multan in 1528. When Humayun took refuge in Sind (1541)[16] Muslim population in the cities of Sind had grown considerably. The countryside had a mixed population in which half-converted Muslims and Hindus predominated.

### Kashmir

Kashmir's conversion to Islam on a large scale also dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century. Mahmud of Ghazni had made some stray efforts at proselytization. Later on arrived in Kashmir one Shah Mirza in saintly robes from Swat in 1315. He entered the service of Sinha Deva, the ruling prince. Shah Mirza helped to oust the Hindu dynasty, and finally he himself ascended the throne in 1346.[17] Thus there were Muslim kings in the Kashmir Valley from the middle of the fourteenth century. However, it was during the reign of Sikandar Butshikan (1394-1417), that the wind of Muslim proselytization blew the hardest. Under him the Kashmiris were offered the choice between Islam and exile. Some Kashmiri Brahmans committed suicide, many left the land, others

14. Afif, *op. cit.* (II n. 15), p. 233.
In Sind, "Compulsory conversions to Mahometanism were not infrequent, the helpless Hindoo being forcibly subjected to circumcision on slight or misconstrued profession, or the false testimony of abandoned Mahometans." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1841, p. 20. Even in the nineteenth century Hindus in the service of the Amir were obliged to wear beards like the Muslims. Thornton *op. cit.* (I, n. 7), IV, p. 296.

15. C.H.I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25), p. 309.
Also Ferishtah *op. cit.* (II, n. 6) II, p. 317.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 501-502.

17. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), II, p. 337.

embraced Islam, and a few began to live under Taqiya, that is, they professed Islam only outwardly.[18] It is said that the fierce intoleranee of Sikandar had left in Kashmir no more than eleven families of Brahmans.[19] Thus it is due to his zeal that today in the Kashmir Valley "there are no more than 524 Hindus in every 10,000 of the population."[20] The Raja of Jammu had been converted to Islam by Timur,[21] but the Jammu region remained mostly Hindu.

Bengal

Most descriptions of Bengal given by European writers point to a mixed population. But "it is evident, from the numerical superiority in Eastern Bengal of the Muslims...that at some period an immense wave of proselytization must have swept over the country and it is most probable that that period was the period of Jalaluddin Muhammad [converted son of the Hindu Raja Ganesh] during whose reign of seventeen years (1414-1431) .....hosts of Hindus are said to have been forcibly converted to Islam."[22] Other causes of large-scale conversions are said to be rivalry between Buddhism and Hinduism, the former joining hands with the Muslims,[23] excesses of the Brahmins in making Hindus turn away from them,[24] and the capture of Hindu places of worship which continued to be visited and revered by Hindus even after they had been turned into Dargahs presided over by a Shaikh in place of a Brahmin.[25] Muslim Sufi Shaikhs also converted people in large numbers by methods both of war[26] and of peace.[27] Usual mixed marriages[28] would have added to

18. *Ibid.*, II, p. 341.
19. C.H.I., III, *op. cit.*, (II, n 25) p. 231. Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470), the Akbar of Kashmir, recalled the exiles, assuaged the fears of the Hindus, and abolished the Jiziyah, but the converts continued to remain Musalman.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
21. *Zafar Nama, op cit.* (n. 1), II, pp. 168-69. Lal, *Twilight, op. cit.* (VI, n 5), p. 39.
22. C.H.I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25), p. 267.
23. R.C. Mitra, *The Decline of Buddhism in India* (Vishvabharati, 1954), pp. 78-79.
24. Abdul Karim, *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal, op. cit.* (X, n. 20), pp. 143-44.
25. *Ibid*, pp. 136-38.
26. *Ibid*, p. 125.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-38.
28. *Ibid*, pp. 145-46.

Muslim population. Employment prospects also helped in the rise of Muslim population, for says Barbosa : "It is obviously an advantage in the sixteenth century Bengal to be a Moor, inasmuch as the Hindus 'daily become Moors to gain the favour of their rulers.'"[29]

Foreign Muslims were there too in large numbers in Bengal. They migrated on several occasions and for various reasons. Some came in the wake of conquest, others as traders and businessmen.[30] Ruknuddin Barbak Shah (1460-74) was probably the first ruler who maintained a large number of Abyssinians as protectors of his throne. He recruited 8,000 Habshis and gave them key positions in his government. Aside from the Abyssinian eunuchs at the court, it was common for other eunuchs to act as harem guards.[31] In addition to the Abyssinians, Bengal played host to other foreigners, especially merchants from Arabia, Egypt, Turkey and other parts of India. Many stayed on in Bengal because of its fertility, riches and cheap food.[32] "Little is reported by European writers about the Hindu population of Bengal beyond remarks to the effect that their children are sometimes sold to be eunuchs, that many of them become converts to the Muslim faith, and that they constitute the majority of the population outside the port cities".[33] While European accounts of Gaur talk of a mixed population of Muslims, Hindus and foreigners (Moors), the *Manasa Vijaya* of Vipradasa (composed 1495) mentions large population of Muslims in Satgaon. It says, "The Muslim population of Saptagrama is innumerable ; they belong to the Mughals, Pathans and Mokadims, Saiyyads, Mullas and Quzis....."[34] Obviously Bengal cities had a good number of Muslims in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

### Gujarat

The kingdom of Gujarat was established in 1396 and its rulers were descended from Wajih-ul-Mulk, a converted Rajput. This dynasty made great efforts to spread Islam. One of its famous

29. Barbosa, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 17), II, p. 148. Also Castanheda, II, p. 441 cited in Lach, *op.cit.* (V, n. 24), I, p. 415.
30. Abdul Karim, *op. cit.* (X, n. 20), p. 140-41.
31. Barbosa, *op. cit.* (VI, n.17), II, 147.
32. Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), I, 416.
33. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 417-18.
34. Sukumar Sen, *Bangla Sahityer Itihasa* (Calcutta, 1940), p. 114, cited in Abdul Karim, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

rulers, Ahmad Shah (1411-1442), was responsible for many conversions. In 1414 he introduced the Jiziyah, and collected it with such strictness, that it brought a number of converts to Islam.[35] This Jiziyah was not rescinded till Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1573. Even after that it took time to go,[36] bringing converts all the while. In 1420 Ahmad Shah punished the 'infidels' of Satpura ; in 1433 raided Dungarpur and in 1440 he brought about Idar's submission.[37] All his conquests were accompanied by conversions and boosted Muslim demography. Mahmud Beghara's (1458-1511) exertions in the field of proselytization were equally impressive. In 1469 he led an army into Sorath against the Mandalik of Girnar. To the Raja's protests that he had paid the tribute regularly, Mahmud replied that he had come "neither for tribute nor for plunder, but to establish the true faith in Sorath." The Raja went on fighting and fleeing and resisting for a whole year, but then had to accept Islam,[38] and received the title of Khan-i-Jahan. It stands to reason that he did not convert alone. In 1473 a raid on Dwarka brought in some more converts. In 1484 the son of the Raja of Champanir was made Musalman (again, not alone) and in the next reign became the Amir of Idar, receiving the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk.

*About conversions through enslavement, Dr. Satish C. Misra,* who has made a special study of the history of Gujarat, writes that "the conflict (in Gujarat) veered round two main objectives—land and women. The conqueror inexorably demanded, more often forcibly wrested, both land and women..."[39] Surely a large number of women would have been made Musalman during these wars.

Immigration of foreign Muslims was also not inconsiderable. Ferishtah writes that following the example of sultan Barbak Shah of Bengal, the sultans of Gujarat and the Deccan also invited groups of Abyssinians and gave them "positions of respect and trust".[40] But Gujarat needed no lessons from Bengal. She abounded in port-towns, and these were doing brisk trade. Her industry was also

35. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), II, pp. 184-85. Also Satish C. Misra, *The Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat* (Bombay, 1963), p. 175.
36. R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad, 1936), p 318.
37. C.H.I., *op. cit.* (III, n. 25), III, pp. 298-300.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 305-06.
39. S.C. Misra, *op. cit.* (n. 35), p. 205.
40. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), II, p. 298.

well-developed. Traders arrived from abroad as well as slaves and soldiers. "Because of the constant threat from the Rajputs and other neighbouring peoples, the Sultan of Gujarat (maintained) a large standing army, recruited mostly from foreign Muslim adventurers to whom he (paid) handsome salaries."[41] On the basis of the writings of Barbosa, Cortesão and Azevedo, Professor Donald F. Lach summarises the situation thus: "Moors from all over the Islamic world congregate in the cities of Gujarat to carry on trade or to find employment as soldiers of the sultan. In addition to the native Moors and their co-religionists of Delhi, a cosmopolitan flavour is given to life by the presence of Turks, Mamalukes, Arabs, Persians, Khurasanis, Turcomans, Abyssinians, and a sprinkling of renegade Christians."[42]

In Cambay, Ratanpur and Rander, the Portuguese found a number of foreign and Indian Muslims.[43] According to Orta, who wrote around 1560, there were a few local Muslims and some low caste Hindus in Bassein when the Portuguese took it in 1535-36.[44]

## Malwa

Since the days of Khalji and Tughlaq sultans of Delhi, there were large number of Muslims in Malwa, both indigenous and foreign.[45] These numbers went on growing during the rule of the independent Muslim rulers of Malwa, the Ghoris and Khaljis (1401-1562). The pattern of growth of Muslim population in Malwa was similar to that in the other regions. Captives made in campaigns against Kherla, Orissa, and Gagraun, in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, would have added to Muslim numbers. Similarly when sultan Mahmud led an expedition against the Hara Rajputs in 1454, he put many of them to the sword, "and sent their children into slavery at Mandu."[46] In 1468 from the ravaged and burning town of Karahra (near Chanderi), 7,000 prisoners were taken.[47]

41. Castanheda, *Historia do descobrimento e conquista da India pelos Portugueses* (Third Ed. Coimbra, 1928), II, p. 316. Mentioned in Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), p. 399.
42. Lach, I, 401.
43. Barbosa, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 17), I, p. 140; Orta and Pires in Lach, I, 404.
44. Lach, I, 405.
45. U. N. Day, *Medieval Malwa* (Delhi, 1967), pp. 6-7.
46. C.H.I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25) p. 356.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 360.

The harem of Malwa sultans formed a great source of proselytization. The seraglio of Ghayas-ud-din (1469-1500) was filled with beautiful slave girls and daughters of Rajas and Zamindars.[48] The number of its inmates was 16,000 according to Nizam-ud-din and 10,000 according to Ferishtah.[49] However, with the rise of Rajputs to power in Malwa, the enslavement of Hindus and the proselytizing activity of Malwa rulers may not have been as sustained as in other regions. Foreign elements in the Malwa army and administration were also not conspicuous.

### The Deccan

The Bahmani or the kingdom of the Deccan had come into being in 1347. With the extension of its dominion and power, Muslim population saw a rapid rise. Continual war with Vijayanagar, Orissa and other smaller Hindu kingdoms brought slaves who in course of time became Musalmans. Nobles and soldiers of foreign extraction filled the army and political life of the Deccan. A few instances of these would suffice to give an idea of the acceleration of Muslim numbers in the Deccan.

48. Day, *op cit.* (n 45), p 244.
Ferishtah, *op cit.* (II, n. 6), II, p. 255.

49. *Tabqat-i-Akbari*, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 83) III, p. 351. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), II, 255. Dr. U.N. Day, *op. cit.* (n. 45) pp. 244-46 thinks that the figure of Nizamuddin is exaggerated. Probably it is not. When it is realised that Ghayasuddin had two battalions of Habsh and Turkish women guards, each of 500, the figure of 1600 (given by Wolseley Haig) appears to be too small to be true. In fact according to Pires, who wrote between 1512 and 1515, the king of Malwa was said to have 2,000 women warriors who rode out to battle with him (*The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires* (London, 1944), I, p. 37 cited in Lach, I, p. 420). A harem of 1600 inmates would have hardly aroused any comment from medieval chroniclers. But Ghayas's seraglio was an unique institution. It was built with beauties collected from all over the world (Ferishtah). Girls were also abducted to supply its requirements. "Besides the musicians, singers, and dancers, usually found in a royal seraglio there were goldsmiths, black-smiths, shoemakers, weavers, potters, tailors, makers of bows, arrows, and quivers, carpenters, wrestlers, and jugglers, each of whom received fixed wages, their officers, also women, being paid at high rates...". (W. Haig and Ferishtah). The wages—two seers of grain and two tankahs per head per day—given to harem inmates were so low as to make one feel that it was a stable for women rather than a harem. If the number was manageable the women would have been paid and looked after better. In view of all this, the figure of 16,000 may not, after all, be an exaggeration.

The first Bahmani king, Alauddin Bahman Shah (1347-1358), despatched an expedition against the northern Carnatic Hindu chieftains, and his booty included "1000 singing and dancing girls, *Murlis* from Hindu temples."[50] In 1406 Sultan Tajuddin Firoz (1397-1422) fought a war with Vijayanagar and captured 60,000 youths and children from its territories. When peace was made Bukka gave, besides other things, 2,000 boys and girls skilled in dancing and music.[51] Incidentally Firoz had a harem of 800 women of various nations, but of course all Muslim.[52]

His successor Ahmad Vali (1422-36), marched through Vijayanagar kingdom, "slaughtering men and enslaving women and children."[53] The captives were made Musalmans.[54] Sultan Ala-ud-din (1436-58) collected a thousand women in his harem. When it is noted that intermittent warfare between the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms continued for more than a century and a half, the story of enslavement, conversions, and harems of kings and nobles need not be carried on. Even ordinary soldiers used to get many slaves, and at the end of the battle of Talikot (1565), "large number of captives consigned to slavery, enriched the whole of the Muslim armies, for the troops were permitted to retain the whole of the plunder..."[55] Capture of women and children in wars with Telingana and Southern chieftaincies too added to Muslim population. The Deccan was also full of foreign Muslims. Most of Bahmian Shah's nobles were foreigners. "His Afghan minister was succeeded by a Persian from Shiraz, and he again by a native of Basrah."[56] Ahmad's son Alauddin also surrounded himself with foreigners. No wonder that in the Bahmani kingdom two parties sprang up—Foreigners (better termad as Afaqis) and Deccanis[57] who were at daggers drawn for power and in politics. Humayun (1458-61) bestowed his favours upon the Foreign faction. His renowned minister Mahmud Gawan was a foreigner,

50. C.H.I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 25) p. 375-76.
51. Sewell, *op. cit.* (II, n. 21), pp. 57-58.
52. C.H.I., III, p. 391.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 398.
55. *Ibid.*, III, 449; Also sewell, *op. cit.* (II, n. 21), p. 198.
56. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 403-404.
57. H.K. Sherwani, *Mahmud Gawan*, *op. cit.* (II, n. 20), pp. 61-71, esp. p. 63 and n. 30.

who kept an army of 200,000 men.[58] Another Malik-ul-Tujjar, the governor of Daulatabad, had with him 7,000 foreign horse.[59] Sultan Ahmad had a special corps of 3000 archers from Iraq, Khurasan Transoxiana, Turkey and Arabia.[60]

There were thus foreigners of all extractions in the Deccan—Arabs, Afghans, Abyssinians, Egyptians, Persians and Turks. Names of some officers like Saiyyad Husain Badakhshi, Mir Ali Sistani, Abdulla Kurd, Qara Khan Kurd, Ali Khan Sistani and Iftakhar-ul-Mulk Hamadani are indicative of their foreign extraction and predominant position.[61] Besides the Bahmani kingdom, Vijayanagar also employed a large number of Muslims in its armies.

One class of foreigners, the Africans, need special mention. Their dark skin made them a class apart; not being considered equal by the other fair-skinned foreigners. "To the negroes were added the *Mumallads*, a name applied to African fathers and Indian mothers."[62] In politics they were partisans of the Deccanis, in status "low caste", in number very large. It would not be unsafe to assume that at the end of the fifteenth century foreigners in the Deccan were in the neighbourhood of a million.

### The Malabar Coast

In Malabar, Muslim population increased considerably during the period of fourteenth-fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. In Quilon, the pearl fishery was monopolized by the Muslims who were there in large numbers. Such was their strength and influence that, although the ruler of Quilon and his armed retainers were always close by the city, the real arbiters of justice in local affairs seemed to be the wealthy "Moors" who ran the fishery.[63] Both Barbosa and Barros talk of the large number of Muhammadans, both foreign and indigenous, in Malabar. The foreigners included Arabs, Persians, Gujaratis, Khurasanis and Deccanis. The local ones were called Moplahs. They were mostly Sunnis, lived in cities and made their living by trade. They comprised about 20 per cent of the total

58. C.H.I., III, p. 432.
59. *Ibid*, p. 406
60. Sherwani, *op. cit.* (II, n. 20), p. 65
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-68.
62. C.H.I., III, p. 404.
63. Barbosa, *op. cit* (VI, n. 17), II, pp. 122-23.

population.[64] Barbosa contends that they were so numerous that the advent of the Portuguese alone prevented Malabar from becoming "a Moorish state."[65] A letter from Goa of the year 1568 asserts that "the Malabar nation is Muslim, and they are almost all pirates and hostile to the Christians."[66]

Thus the rise of Muslim population through conversions was rather rapid in the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth century. But proselytization to Islam received some check in the sixteenth century due to a number of factors. One was the work of the Bhakta religious reformers of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. The aim of these reformers may not have been to stop conversions to Islam or to reconvert people to Hinduism, but as will be seen at a later stage, their message and work did help check conversions to Islam.

Moreover, the Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) gradually removed all modes of pressures which used to compel people to become Musalmans. In 1562 he abolished the custom of enslaving helpless people in times of war; it was mostly such captives who used to be converted to Islam by their Muslim captors and masters. In 1564 he abolished the Jiziyah: Firoz Tughlaq is witness to the fact that its strict enforcement brought many converts to Islam. Earlier in 1563 he had abolished the Pilgrim Tax on the Hindus. Thus in Akbar's time conversion to Islam by force, through enslavement, or economic pressure seems to have been restricted. Hindus could get high jobs as Hindus: conversion was not necessary to obtain them. Akbar even permitted such Hindus as had been forcibly converted to Islam to return to their original faith. Although contemporary accounts are silent on the numbers that went back to Hinduism as a result of this permission, yet it would be correct to presume that Akbar removed obstructions in a practice which was probably prevalent.

The arrival of the Portuguese also provided a check and a challenge to Muslim proselytizing endeavour. They had captured Goa, Daman and Diu in the early years of the sixteenth century. In their triumphal entry into Goa (A.D. 1510), "the clergymen were

64. K. Logan, *Malabar* (Madras, 1951), I, p. 159. Also Tech, 368-69, on the impression of Barbosa and Barros
65. Barbosa, II, p. 74.
66. Tech, *op. cit.* IV, n. 241, I, p. 447.

fore the largest number of conversions probably took place under the Turks and the Afghans who ruled between c. 1300 and 1556. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Muslim rule also spread in all parts of the country either under the central authority of Delhi or under independent Muhammadan kings. Consequently, the largest number of conversions in India took place during this period.

There is one contemporary source which gives precise information about the proportion of Muslims in the total population, but it is not reliable. In the *Tarikh-i-Salim Shahi*,[81] an autobiographical memoir, Akbar's son and successor Jahangir is claimed to have written that on one occasion in a conversation with his father, Akbar is reported to have said : "My dear child.....with all of God's creatures, I am at peace ; why should I permit myself, under any consideration, to be the cause of molestation or aggression to any one ? Besides, are not five parts in six of mankind either Hindus or aliens to the faith ; and were I to be governed by motives of the kind suggested in your inquiry, what alternative can I have but to put them all to death ? I have thought it therefore my wisest plan to let these men alone."[82]

Jahangir is supposed to have repeated this ratio at another place. "Of the whole populatiou of Hindustan it is notorious that five parts in six are composed of Hindus, the adorers of images, and the whole concerns of trade and manufacture.....are entirely under the management of these classes. Were it, therefore, ever so much my desire to convert them to the true faith, it would be impossible, otherwise than through excision of millions of men...but

81. "Memoirs of the Emperor Jahangueir, written by himself, and translated from a Persian Manuscript" by Major David Price (London, 1829), p. 15. Calcutta Edition (Bangabasi Press, 1906) pp. 21-22.
This work, according to Sir Henry Elliot, does not comprise the real *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* or *Memoirs of Jahangir*. He also points out a number of exaggerations in which the *Tarikh-i-Salim Shahi* indulges (E and D, VI, pp. 256-264), and adds that "some parts at least...must be ranked in the same class" as fiction. (E and D, VI, p. 257).
Dr. Beni Prasad, writing on the *Tarkikh-i-Salim Shahi* says : "The name of the author is unknown. On several points it is fuller than the genuine memoirs. But the work as a whole is a fabrication". (*History of Jahangir*, *op. cit.* (VII, n. 1), pp. 387-88.

82. *Tarikh-i-Salim Shahi* (Calcutta Edition), pp. 21-22.

the massacre of a whole people can never be any business of mine."[83]

These statements, attributed to Jahangir, about the proportion of Muslim population could not have been easily brushed aside but for the fact that they appear to be obviously wrong. From what we know of Akbar and Jahangir, such anti-Hindu sentiments and statements cannot be attributed to them. Whosoever be the writer of the *Tarikh-i-Salim Shahi*, he cannot delude us because, as will be seen later, Muslims were not one-sixth of the Hindu population even as late as the year 1800.

We have, therefore, only one choice left to arrive at a tentative percentage of Muslims in A.D. 1600. It is by calculating on the earlier basis, keeping in view the periods when there was a rapid growth of Muslim numbers and when it was not so rapid. If during the period of acceleration the Muslim population became double in sixty to seventy years' time, then the 3.2 million estimated for the year 1400 would have become 6.4 in 1470 and 12.8 in 1530. Thereafter, because of the Bhakti movement and Akbar's policies, there would have been a brake put on this accelerated growth, and by 1600 Muslim numbers may not have risen beyond 15 million. In that year the total population of India has been estimated at 140 millions. Muslims would have formed about one-ninth to one-tenth of India's total population.

83. *Ibid.*, p

# XII

## A. D. 1600-1800

During the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Jahangir continued to follow Akbar's policy of *sulehkul*. Perhaps a few cases of forcible conversions might have been brought to his notice so as to prompt him to issue, in the sixth year of his reign, a royal order prohibiting the provincial governors from converting any one forcibly to Islam.[1] Jahangir also discouraged making of eunuchs in Bengal for being presented to the court[2] (for service in the Mughal harem and ultimately becoming Muhammadans). But he was not against peaceful encouragement to conversions.[3] Some prisoners were also offered pardon if they turned Musalman.[4]

In one respect alone Jahangir deviated from the policy of his father : he did not permit people to embrace Hinduism even of their own free will. He severely punished Kaukab, Sharif and Abdul Latif who, under the influence of a Sanyasi, showed inclination for Hinduism.[5] This policy would have stopped any erosion of Muslim numbers. Besides, while on a visit to Kashmir, when he learnt that the Hindus and Muslims intermarried freely, "and both give and take girls (he ordered that) taking them is good but giving them, God forbid."[6] And any violation of this order was to

1. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op. cit.* (VII, n. 42), I, p. 205.
2. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 150-151.
3. Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 18), p 83.
4. Sri Ram Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors, op. cit.* (II, n. 37), pp. 61-62.
5. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri,* I, p 171.
6. *Ibid.*, II, p. 181.

be visited with capital punishment.[7] Jahangir was unnecessarily fussy, because, whether a Muslim married a Hindu girl or a Hindu married a Muslim girl, in course of time all of them used to become Muhammadan.[8] Shahjahan's orders in this regard were that the Hindus could keep their Muslim wives only if they accepted Islam. Consequently, during his reign, 4,000 to 5,000 Hindus converted to Islam in Bhadnor alone.[9] 70 such cases were found in Gujarat and 400 in the Punjab.[10] The policy of converting such "families" would have contributed to the growth of Muslim numbers.

Shahjahan was even otherwise interested in making converts. Professor Sri Ram Sharma has collected facts and figures of Hindus converted to Islam from the works of Qazvini, Lahori, Salih, Mohsin Fani, Khafi Khan, etc. during Shahjahan's reign and has thus saved me the labour of doing the same. The following is the summary of what he says. "Early in his reign Shahjahan had appointed a Superintendent of Converts to Islam, thus setting up a department for the special purpose of making converts. The one common practice was to make terms with the criminals.....The Hindus of the Punjab, Bhimbar Bhadauri and Sirhind.....were all offered remission of their sentences provided they accepted the 'true faith'. When the war with the Portuguese started, of the 400 prisoners taken a few became Muslims. The rest were kept in prison with orders that whenever they expressed willingness to embrace Islam, they were to be converted, liberated and given daily allowances.[11] An order was issued in the seventh year of his reign that if a Hindu wanted to be converted to Islam, his family should not place any obstacles in his way..."Under Shahjahan, apostasy from Islam had again become a capital crime."[12]

7. *Loc. cit.*
8. May be it was because of this that Akbar had definitely discouraged all kinds of inter-communal marriages. Badaoni, *op. cit.* (II, n. 40) II, p. 413.

   Also *Ain*, Blochmann, I, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 104) p. 220.
9. Qazvini, *Badshah Nama*, pp. 444-45. Lahori, *op. cit.* (VII, n. 7) I, ii, p. 58. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* (I, n. 3), I, 510.
10. Sharma, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 88-89 and Sharma, *Conversion and Re-conversion to Hinduism* (D.A.V. College Historical Series, No.2 n. d.) p. 12. Also Qazvini, p. 562.
11. Also Lahori, *op. cit.* (VII, n. 7) I, p. 534.
12. Sharma, *op. cit.* (n. 4) pp. 90-91.

Some other practices discontinued by Akbar were revived by Shahjahan. Forcible conversion during war became common in his reign. "When Shuja was appointed governor of Kabul (he carried on) a ruthless war in the Hindu territory beyond the Indus..... Sixteen sons and dependents of Hathi were converted by force. The sword of Islam further yielded a crop of Muslim converts.....The rebellion of Jujuhar Singh yielded a rich crop of Muslim converts, mostly minors. His young son Durga and his grandson Durjan Sal were both converted to become Imam Quli and Ali Quli[13].....Most of the women had burnt themselves.....but such as were captured—probably slave girls and maids—were converted and distributed among Muslim Mansabdars.[14].....The conquest of Beglana was followed by conversion of Naharji's son.....who now become Daulatmand."[15]

Akbar had prohibited enslavement and sale of women and children of peasants who had defaulted in payment of revenue. He knew, as Abul Fazl says, that many evil hearted and vicious men either because of ill-founded suspicion or sheer greed, used to proceed to villages and mahals and sack them.[16] But under Shahjaban conditions worsened. Now peasants were compelled to sell their women and children to meet the revenue demand.[17] Manrique writes that the peasants "are carried off . ...to various markets and fairs (to be sold), with their poor unhappy wives behind them carrying their small children.....all crying and lamenting....."[18] According to Qazvini, Shahjahan's orders in this regard were that captives were not to be sold to Hindus as slaves,[19] and under Muslim customers they could only become Musalman.

Under Shahjahan, therefore, active steps were taken to swell the number of Muslims. He is praised by all contemporary Persian chroniclers as a great Muslim king who was anxious to restore the prestige of Islam. But proselytization to Islam as such could not be extensive under Shahjahan. He was not a royal

13. Lahori, I, ii, p 133.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 139. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* (I, n 3) I, 522-23.
15. Sharma, *op. cit.* (n. 4) p. 91.
16. *Akbar Nama*, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 42) II, pp. 159-60.
17. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), II, p. 451.
18. Manrique, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 73) II, p. 272. Also see Bernier, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 67) p. 205.
19. Qazvini, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 405.

missionary like Sultan Firoz Tughlaq, Sikandar Butshikan, Jalaluddin of Bengal, Mahmud Beghara of Gujarat or the Emperor Aurangzeb. In spite of certain deviations, the catholic spirit of Akbar's government had not been lost under Jahangir and Shahjahan.[20] Dara Shikoh was Shahjahan's favourite son, and his nearness to the throne would have imparted an unorthodox colour to administration.

Indeed, it appears that from about the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century, conversions to Islam were not done on a very large scale. Bernier, who was in India towards the closing years of Shahjahan's and early years of Aurangzeb's reign found India a country of vast majority of Hindus. He even goes on to say : "The great Mogol is a foreigner in Hindoustan, he finds himself in a hostile country, or nearly so ; a country containing hundreds of Gentiles to one Mogol, or even to one Muhometan."[21] Being a foreigner, Bernier might not have been able to quite distinguish between Hindus and Muslims.[22] In any case, as Beni Prasad points out, 'he (Bernier) wrote from mere observation and made no systematic calculation'.[23] Nevertheless, Bernier's impression is similar to the observations of men like Timur and Babur and many other foreign writers.[24] What is of importance about Bernier's assertion is that in spite of some conversions in the countryside, the demographic complexion of the society in which he lived and moved had not perhaps registered any appreciable change in the Hindu-Muslim proportion since the days of Babur.

But with the coming into power of Aurangzeb a spate of conversions followed. "The proselytizing activity of Aurangzeb seems to have started about the year 1666 (the year of Shahjahan's death in prison), and remained unabated till the end of his life".[25] He

20. Bernier, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 67) p. 306.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
22. See Section II.
23. Beni Prasad, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 5[2]), p. 17 n.
24. Early in the seventeenth century, Muhammad Sharif Hanafi, the author of *Mafasirus-Salatin* (composed A.D. 1625) and a much travelled man, carried the same impression about the Southern region of the country. Writing about Carnatic he says : "all the people...are idolaters. There is not a single Musalman. Occasionally a Musalman may visit the country deputed by Nizam Shah, Adil Shah or Kutb Shah, but the natives are all infidels". Elliot & Dowson, VII, p. 139.
25. S.R. Sharma, *op. cit.* (II, n. 37) p. 165. Professor Sharma has again come to my rescue by collecting facts and figures of conversions from the original

tried his utmost to raise the number of Muslims by all possible means.

In April 1667, four revenue collectors (*qanungos*), who had been dismissed for various faults, were reinstated on their accepting the Muhammadan faith.[26] Aurangzeb's declared policy of "*Qanungo ba-sharte Islam.*"[27] brought many converts and many Muslim families in Punjab still retain the letter of reinstatement on conversion or fresh appointment of Muslims in place of Hindu Qanungos who were retrenched because they would not convert.[28] Such cases belong to places from the Punjab to Bengal which shows that the policy was followed throughout the length and breadth of the country.[29] Government appointments and promotions on conversion too were of frequent occurrences. Nam Dev was, on conversion, appointed to the command of 400 ; and Shiva Singh, a grandson of Raja Kishan Das of Amroha was on becoming Musalman appointed Musharaf of Imtiazgarh. The *News Letters* mention conversion of Nek Ram, who rose to acquire the title of a Raja, and Dilawar, who is spoken of as a commander of 1000.

Tempting offers were given to high and low to embrace Islam. Even Rajas and Zamindars could not resist such temptation. A brother of the Zamindar of Dev Garh converted to Muhammadanism and became Islam Yar. He was given the Zamindari, superseding the existing chief. Some others like Zorawar Singh and Shyam Singh of the same estate followed suit.[30] Devi Chand, a Zamindar of Manoharpur, who had been dismissed from his mansab, was restored to it on becoming Musalman. There are many other similar cases.[31] Shankarji, the Zamindar of Pataudi, and Fatch Singh son of Raja Ram the Jat leader, and the son of Gokal Jat were converted, the last one after his father's death. Bishan Narayan, son of Raja Shiv Narayan of Kuch Bihar, was admitted to Islam

sources of Aurangzeb's reign including News Letters (*Akhbarats*) and royal correspondence. Sharma pp. 165-174. Since it is a matter of facts and figures and not of "interpretation", there need be no hesitation in accepting them.

26. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
27. K.R. Qanungo, *op. cit.* (X, n. 56), p. ii.
28. J.N. Sarkar, *Aurangzeb.*
29. Sharma, *op. cit.* (11, n. 37), pp. 169-173.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
31. *Loc. cit.*

while Aurangzeb's armies were busy in an expedition against his father. Kondaji, uncle of Netoji was also converted in the tenth year of reign. The Raja of Palamau was offered better terms if he would accept Islam. Manucci mentions the case of three Rajas, who got appointments at the imperial court on conversion.[32] These are individual instances, but many loyal servants and subjects of the Rajas and Zamindars would have followed suit and embraced Islam when their masters become Musalman.

The poor converted more easily and in larger numbers. Of the temptations given for conversion were at audience with the Emperor, a robe of Honour, and a daily allowance which sometimes was as low as four annas or as high as seven rupees.[33] A Deccanese was converted to Islam and given Rs. 2,000.[34] Obviously economic inducement was a great temptation for the poor. Criminals were given remission from sentence if they conver- ed to Islam. The *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* mentions a case in which a Hindu clerk killed the seducer of his sister, but escaped execution by embracing Islam.[35] There were many more similar cases.[36] On September, 1681, an order was issued that all prisoners who would accept Islam were to be set at liberty.[37] The practice was so common that no specific cases need be mentioned.

Imposition of the Jiziyah brought a better crop of converts. We have seen that under Firoz Tughlaq the strict imposition of Jiziyah had compelled many people to become Musalmans. Under Aurangzeb similar economic pressure would have brought about the same results. Manucci notes that the Jiziyah was instituted "to force the Hindus to become Muhammedans. Many who were unable to pay turned Muhammedans, to obtain relief from the insults of the collectors."[38] Aurangzeb "was of the opinion that he had found in this tax an excellent means of succeed-

32. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), II, p. 436.
33. Sharma, p. 170.
34. *Alamgir Nama*, p. 567 cited in Sharma p. 173.
35. Mustaad Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, Eng. trs. Jadunath Sarkar (Calcutta 1947), p. 73.
36. Sharma, *op. cit.* (II, n. 37), pp. 170-172. Rizqullah mentions the case of a thief who converted to Islam and was given charge of a city. *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, fols. 33b-34a.
37. News Letter of even date, cited in Sharma, p. 166.
38. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), II, 234.

ing in converting them."[39] Customs duties on the Hindu traders were increased; on Muslims abolished.[40] As seen earlier, if the economic stress could make some people convert just for a dole of four annas per day, how many more would have accepted Islam on account of the compulsions of the Jiziyah.

The enslavement of women and children too was a common phenomenon now. The practice was revived under Shahjahan: it had not probably been abolished completely earlier. An interesting piece of information supplied by Manucci should suffice here. He gives a long list of women dancers, singers and slave-girls like Hira Bai, Sundar Bai, Nain-jot Bai, Chanchal Bai, Apsara Bai, Khushhal Bai, Kesar Bai, Gulal, Champa, Chameli, Saloni, Madhumati, Koil, Menhdi, Moti, Kishmish, Pista etc., etc., and adds: "All the above names are Hindu, and ordinarily these.. are Hindus by race, who had been carried off in infancy from various villages or the houses of different rebel Hindu princes. In spite of their Hindu names, they are, however, Mahomedans."[41] It appears that the number of such converts was so large that even their Hindu names could not be changed to Islamic.[42]

Thus Aurangzeb's proselytizing zeal resulted in good number of conversions. He seems to have employed all the means at his disposal to raise Muslim numbers. In the dispute about estates between two brothers or relatives, the Raja or Zamindar who embraced Islam was given the property. Other kinds of pressures or temptations brought other Rajas into the fold of Islam.[43] Criminals were set free if they became Muslims. Economic pressure of Jiziyah and inducement of jobs brought in many more converts. Enslavement too was a contributory factor. Then there was sheer force —force by the king, his nobles and local officers. There are references

39. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 288-89, also IV, p. 117. Also most Persian chroniclers.
40. *Ibid.*, II, p. 415.
41. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 336, 337-338.
For instances of enslavement by Aurangzeb see Khafi Khan E and D. VII, pp. 300, 371.
42. This policy of enslavement and conversion was also followed by others of smaller note. Sidi Yaqut of Janjira once took a Maratha fort after granting quarter to the garrison. Seven hundred persons came out. Notwithstanding his word, "he made the children and pretty women slaves, and forcibly converted them to Islam...but the men he put to death."
Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* (I,n. 3), II, p. 228.
43. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), II, p. 436

in the reports forwarded by Kotwals and Faujdars about their efforts and achievements in making converts in their jurisdiction. The forcible conversion of frontier tribes by Aurangzeb is a well-known fact. "Popular Hindu and Sikh tradition ascribes mass conversions by force to Aurangzeb's reign."[44] Christians too were forcibly converted to Islam.[45] Both official and non-official sources point to a high rate of conversion, much above the normal. Naturally Aurangzeb seems to have been satisfied with his achievements. Manucci says that just before the emperor died, he said, "I die happy for at least the world will be able to say that I have employed every effort to destroy the enemies of the Muhammedan faith."[46]

Although the actual addition to Muslim numbers because of Aurangzeb's all-embracing campaign for proselytization is difficult to compute, yet his pronouncements, his enthusiasm, his collection of day-to-day information about conversions, his personally instructing the neo-converts in the tenets of Islamic faith, and his ultimate satisfaction at his success together with the information contained in contemporary writings, do show clearly that addition to Muslim population during his reign was substantial.

After Aurangzeb's death the spate of conversions abated. The Royal Princes got busy in wars of succession, the chief nobles in capturing power or carving out independent kingdoms. From the description of wars during the early part of the eighteenth century, aimed at succession or independence, it appears that they resulted in Muslim losses mainly, because "the descendants of Aurangzeb could not persuade one (Rajput) to strike a blow in defence of his throne".[47] Repeated appeals made by the contending parties that Muslim lives should not be wasted in futile warfare, is not without significance.[48] It is, at least obvious that in such wars Hindu captives or converts could not be obtained.

Invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali added to the loss in Muslim numbers.[49] The effects of Nadir's march through the Punjab, his massacre at Delhi which cost thousands of Muslim lives,[49] and Abdali's sack of the Punjab not less than eight times

44. Sharma, p. 168.
45. Manucci, *op. cit.* (Ed. n. 4), II, p. 491.
46. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 392.
47. C.H.I., IV, *op. cit.*, VI, n. 97, p. 358.
48. E.g. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* fn. 41, pp. 394, 452, 486, 542.
49. C.H.I., IV, p. 381 and n. 2.

between 1748 and 1769,[50] on Indian and especially Muslim demography need not be stressed. Even Delhi, the imperial capital, could not recover from the shocks right up to the end of the century.[51]

However, during this period a good number of Afghans had migrated to India, compensating to some extent the loss of Muslim population. In the region comprising the modern districts of Bijnor, Moradabad, Badaon, Bareilly, Shahajahanpur, Rohilla Afghans had started settling in the seventeenth century.[52] 'Sometime during the reign of Shahjahan, Daud Zai Afghans (had) settled in this tract and founded the important town of Shahjahanpur". But in the eighteenth century, while the rise of Nadir Shah scattered the Afghans in their own country and many of them came to India, the disturbed political state of India and the anxiety of the different leaders to secure military assistance of the warlike Afghans provided the necessary openings which the Afghans well utilized.[53] Thus the displacement from Qandhar and the country around by Nadir Shah and the pull exercised by the political vacuum caused by the rapid decline of the Mughal empire resulted in the immigration of a goodly number of Afghans [54] By the middle of the eighteenth century Najibuddaulah, a Yusufzai Rohilla Nawab in India, declared on the eve of the battle of Panipat (1761) that he could depend upon the support of 150,000 Afghans who were in India.[55]

But for the compensating immigration, the resources of the Mughal empire in the eighteenth century rapidly declined and economic temptations could not be offered to obtain converts. Jiziyah was officially abolished in 1719-20.[56] It was only a formal recognition of the fact that it could not be collected after Aurang-

50. Shaikh Abdur Rashid, *Najibuddaulah, His Life and Times*, (Cosmopolitan Publishers, Aligarh, 1952), Introduction, pp. xlix-li. Also see Irvine, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 36, 1907, pp. 46 ff.
51. W. Francklin, *The History of the Reign of Shah-Aulum op. cit.* (VII, n. 69) pp. 200-201.
52. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire, op. cit.* (VII, n. 72), I, pp. 27-28.
53. Abdur Rashid, *Najibuddaulah, op. cit.* (n. 50) Intro. xxxii, l iii.
54. *Ibid.*, lii-iv.
55. *Ibid.*, lxxvi.
56. Khafi Khan, p. 479.

zeb's death.[57] In independent Muslim states which had been fighting against Aurangzeb or had emerged with the decline of the Mughal empire, the effort was to seek the goodwill of the Hindus rather than to annoy them with any compaign for proselytization.[58]

Moreover, the Hindus—Jats, Maratha, Sikhs, and Rajputs—had gathered strength. By 1719 when the Faujdari of Surat was held by Raja Jai Singh and the Subedaris of Ahmedabad and Ajmer, including Jodhpur, by Ajit Singh, "the two Rajas held all the country from thirty *kos* of Delhi .....to the shores of the sea at Surat."[59] The power of the Rajputs can be gauged from certain acts of Ajit Singh.[60] In the Punjab, Banda Bahadur's activities were continued by his successors until the Sikhs became masters of the Punjab, and they in place of permitting any further erosion of Hindu numbers, converted people to their own creed, sometimes by force.[61] The power of the Marathas already established in the South, began to be extended to the North, so that by the middle of the eighteenth century, Rustam Ali, who was compelled to "travel from city to city in search of employment and subsistence", writes in his *Tarikh-i-Hind* (composed A.D. 1741-42) that "from the day he left Shah Jahanabad (Delhi), and travelled through the country of idolatry, it was here (Bhopal) only that he found Islam to be predominant."[62]

In these circumstances, conversions to Islam became rare if not altogether out of the question. Some stray efforts at conversion no doubt continued to be made even during the eighteenth century, but without much success. For instance when in 1716 Banda the Sikh Guru with his 740 followers was given by Farrukh Siyar the

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 462, 516, 524. Also *Kanzul-Mekhfuz*, E and D, VIII, p. 39.
58. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* (n. 41) p. 325.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 485.
60. "Maharaja Ajit Singh took back the Maharani, his daughter, who had been married to Farrukh Siyar, with all her Jewels... he made her throw off her Musalman dress, dismissed her Muhammadan attendants and sent her to her native country.... In the reign of no former Emperor has any Raja been so presumptuous as to take his daughter after she had been married to a king and admitted to the honour of Islam."
Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 483.
Probably this was not an isolated case of reconversion to Hinduism.
61. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* (n. 41), p. 419.
62. E and D, VIII, p. 58.

choice between Islam and death, they all died to a man rather than become Musalman.[63] Similarly, according to T.W. Arnold, Tipu Sultan issued an order to the people of Malabar to become Musalmans, "and early in 1789 (he) prepared to enforce his proclamation with an army of more than twenty thousand men....Thousands of Hindus were accordingly circumcised and made to eat beef; but this monarch himself perished, early in 1799....Most of the Brahmans and Nayars who had been forcibly converted subsequently disowned their new religion."[64]

From all the evidence available, it appears that Muslim population did not register rise in the eighteenth century through proselytization. On the contrary, there was perhaps a recession even in its natural growth due to disturbed political conditions in which Muslim numbers seem to have suffered a shrinkage.

To conclude : while the total population of India from 1000 to 1800 had registered rise and fall by turns, Muslim population had shown only a constant rise. In 1000 Muslim numbers in India were microscopic. In 1200 they were about three to four hundred thousand. By 1400 their number had risen probably to 3.2 million and they formed 1 85 per cent of the total population. In 1600 they were probably 15 million. And from 1 : 10 to 1 : 11 Muslim-Hindu ratio in 1600 the proportion of Muslims to Hindus had gone up to about 1 : 7 by the year 1800. When Bishop Heber wrote his journal (1826), his inquiries pointed to a Muslim-Hindu ratio of 1 : 6.[65] Edward Thornton's Gazetteer[66] published in 1854 also gives the ratio of 1 : 6.[67] Thus about the middle of the ninteenth century,

63. C.H.I., IV, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 97) p. 335.
Some people would have been converted during the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. Muhammad Aslam in his *Farhat-un-Nazirin* says that during the Third Battle of Panipat (1761) about 90,000 persons, "male and female, were taken prisoner and obtained eternal happiness by embracing the Muhammadan faith", *op. cit.* (II. n. 19), p. 171. But not only is he not supported by any other contemporary historian, the very incidents of the war militate against such large-scale conversions.

64. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, pp. 261 ff. cited in Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan*, *op. cit.* (IX, n. 11). p. 33.

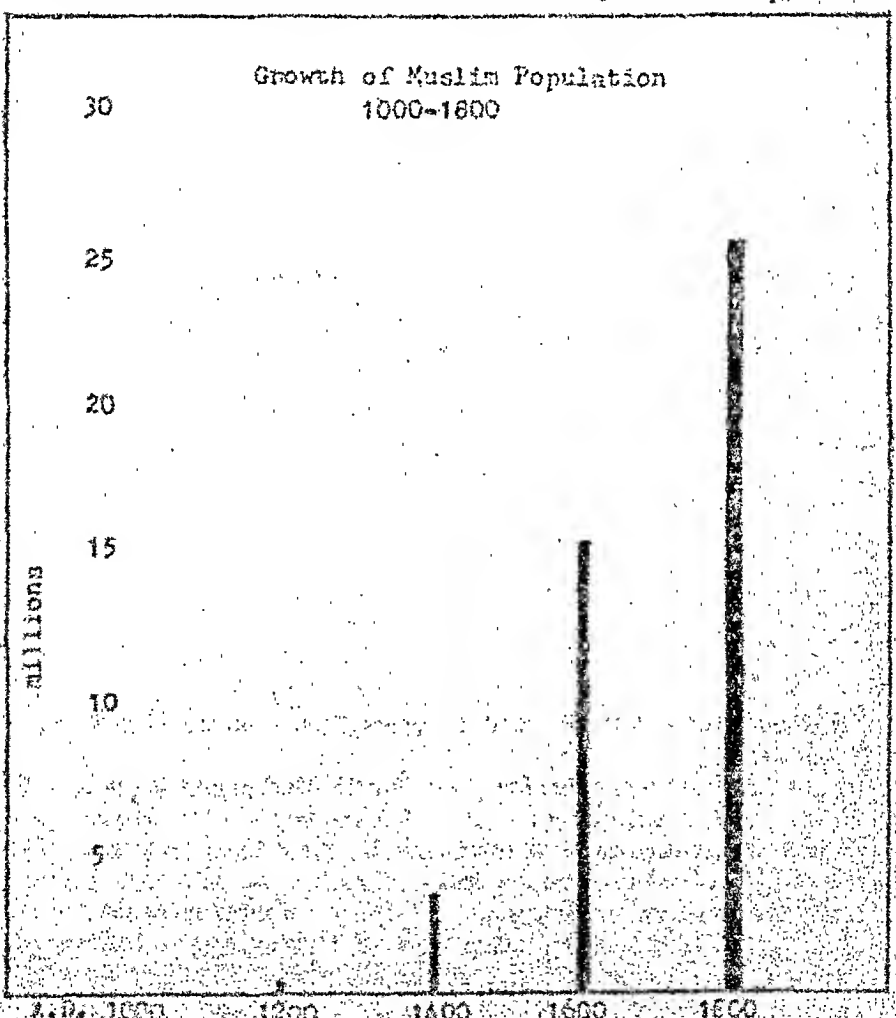
65. Heber's *Journal*, *op. cit.* (I, n. 5). Also see J.M. Datta, *Modern Review*, January, 1918, pp. 33-34.

66. *op. cit* (I, n. 7).

67. Some population figures given in Thornton's Gazetteer giving an idea of the proportion of Muslims have been given in Appendix C.

the Muslim-Hindu ratio stood approximately at 1 : 6. This would make the Muslims 16 per cent of the total population. In 1800 this percentage was obviously less—15 or even 14. The total population estimated for A.D. 1800 is 170 million. Muslims who were 15 per cent of the total would have been about 25 million. By the end of the nineteenth century, the ratio had changed to 1 : 5, and Stanley Lanepoole, whose *Medieval India* was first published in 1903, rightly observes: "The population of India in the present day is over three hundred millions, and every sixth man is a Muslim."[68] The total population of India, according to 1901 Census was 283, 867, 584

*Diagram showing the estimated Growth of Muslim Population*




68. S. Lanepoole, *Medieval India*, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 2), p. 1.

(including persons in the N.W. Frontier Province) and Muslims numbered 62,861,542.[69] Therefore, approximately every sixth person was a Muslim and the ratio stood at 1 : 5. And since Muslim numbers in proportion to the Hindus have increased progressively through decades and centuries, a ratio of 1 : 6 for the middle of the nineteenth and 1 : 7 for the year 1800 is not only a fair estimate but almost a correct figure for which evidence is available in Thronton's Gazetteer and its authentic sources.[70]

69. See Census Report for 1901 and Kingsley Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 179, Table 77.

70. Robert Orme's estimates are low both for the Muslim population as well as for the total population of India. His assessment of the Hindu-Muslim proportion also does not seem to be correct. What he writes is this : "From these origins time has formed in India a nation of near ten million of Mahomedans whom the Europeans call Moor, to them under the authority of the Great Mogul, the greatest part of Hindustan is now subject : but although the reigning nation, they are outnumbered by the Indians ten to one."
Robert Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, 3 vols 4th ed., (London, 1803), I, p. 24.

# PART 1

# Components of Growth of Muslim Population in Medieval India

# XIII

## COMPONENTS OF GROWTH OF MUSLIM POPULATION

A study of the preceding pages clearly shows that while the total population of medieval India both rose and fell, Muslim population indicated only a rising trend. It also shows that the rise was due mainly to conversions of Hindus to Islam. It needs no reiteration that "it was a part of the state policy to establish Islam as the religion of the whole land".[1] It would again be a truism to say that "Islam is essentially a missionary religion and every Muslim is a missionary of his faith (and as they settled in India) they must have entered upon missionary efforts...."[2] Thus Muslim rulers, nobles, Mashaikh, Maulvis, traders and merchants were all in one way or the other Muslim missionaries.

### Conversions

Some available facts, figures, and estimates of the numbers converted in the medieval period have been given in previous chapters, and any repetition here is uncalled for. Islam has spread in many parts of the world through wars and campaigns. In the medieval Indian chronicles the sovereign is always mentioned as 'the King of Islam', the territories of his empire are referred to as the 'Land of Islam', its armies as 'soldiers of Islam', and its religious and judicial head as 'Shaikh-ul-Islam'. The monarch was committed to make Islam the true basis of private and public life through the

1. Titus, *op. cit.* (IX, n.11), p. 32.
2. Tara Chand, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 14), p. 33.

enforcement of the Shariat and to convert the people to the "true faith". In India the Muslim rulers' keenness to obtain converts in war is vouched by many chroniclers. The *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, gives a clear idea of the psychology of the rulers in this regard. Its author was a contemporary of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, the son of Firoz Tughlaq. He says that while fighting Rai Subir (Sumer) in the vicinity of Iraj, the Sultan thought : 'If I will give orders to...the army to fight (outright), they will not leave even a trace of the Kafirs in the region, but if I shall advance slowly, then probably these people will agree to embrace Islam'.[3] What Professor Mohammad Habib writes concerning the Mongol applies equally to Turkish expeditions. "In 1330 the country was invaded by the Mongols who indulged in arson, rape and murder throughout the Valley (of Kashmir) The kings and the Brahmans fled away but among the inhabitants who remained...Muslim ways of life were gradually adopted by the people as the only alternative..."[4] Thus warfare brought captives, and captives were made Musalmans. Such was not the situation only in the North ; in South also such methods of conversion prevailed, especially during wars between Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms Throughout the medieval period such wars were common, and forcible conversions helped in the rapid growth of Muslim population.

The rulers used force and persuasion in equal measure. Their resources were great. They could give jobs, honours, and titles, and many other economic concessions and status benefits as inducements to conversion, and many people would have taken advantages of these facilities. We have referred to Mubarak Khalji's encouragement to Hindus to accept Islam by presenting the convert with a robe and a gold ornament. People used to be converted in this fashion right up to the reign of Aurangzeb and perhaps even thereafter. There were subtler methods too. The *Banshasmriti* of Satya Krishna Biswas states that in Bengal the Rajas and Zamindars who could not deposit land revenue by a certain date had to convert to Muhammadanism. The *Banshasmriti* narrates an isola-

3. Muhammad Bihamid Khani, *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, British Museum Ms. 440b, trans. into Hindi by A.A. Rizvi in *Uttar Timur Kalin Bharat*, Pt. II (Aligarh, 1959), p. 30.

4. Mohammad Habib, *Some Aspects of the Foundation of the Delhi Sultonate*, *op. cit.* (XI, n. 6), p. 20.

led incident,[5] but as this regulation of the thirteenth century had been revived by Murshid Quli Khan, or had continued right up to his times, many local Rajas and Zamindars would have been converted in the course of four centuries. Firoz Tughlaq (1351-88) instructed his revenue collectors to convert Hindus to Islam.[6] He rescinded the Jiziyah to lure people to become Muhammadans, and this measure brought large additions to Muslim population.[7]

5. It gives a historical sketch and geneology of the family of Raja of Samudragarh, a place situated between Katwa and Bandel Railway stations. Since the writer Satya Krishna Biswas has descended from Gopi Mohan Biswas, the last Diwan of the ruling house (*op. cit.*, X, n. 52, p. 10), the narrative appears to be quite reliable. It says that after Bakhtiyar Khalji overran Bengal, it became a rule that if revenue was not deposited within the prescribed time, the defaulting landlord (*bhuswami*) had either to lose his land or become Musalman. This is also referred to in the *Banglar Itihasa* of Babu Raj Krishna (p. 7). *Banshasmriti* says that once Raja Ranjit Bhatt of Samudragarh went to deposit his land revenue, but at the Treasury he found that the Raja of Krishnanagar had not reached in time. He reflected that if the Raja of Krishnanagar became Muslim, much harm would be done because he was a bigger landlord. Therefore, "in the larger interest of Hinduism", Ranjit Bhatt deposited his money as revenue on behalf of the Raja of Krishnanagar and himself became a Muslim. But the most interesting part of the narrative is that on his return to his land the newly converted Raja started compelling others also to embrace Islam (because perhaps therein alone lay his security and defence).

According to the author of the *Banshasmriti* the family still lives in Samudragarh, now only a small village. All the members are given two names—one Hindu and the other Muslim at the *namkaran* ceremony. The present Raja's (1926?) Muslim name is Ichamat Khan and Hindu name is Makhan Lal Thakur.

6. Afif, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 15), pp. 268-69.
Also I. Prasad, *Qaraunah Turks*, *op. cit.*, IV, n. 17), p. 331.

7. In his *Fatuhat-i-Firoz Shahi*, Sultan Firoz Tughlaq candidly writes : "I encouraged my infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the prophet, and I proclaimed that every one who repeated the *kalima* of *tauhid* and became Musalman should be exempt from Jiziyah.....Information of this came to the ears of the people at large, and great numbers of Hindus presented themselves, and were admitted to the honour of Islam. Thus they came forward day by day from every quarter, go on coming to this day, and adopting the faith, are exonerated from the Jiziyah, and are favoured with *khilats* and presents".

*Fatuhat-i-Firoz Shahi*, trs. in Elliot & Dowson, III, p. 368. Also Hindi trs. in Rizvi, *Tughlaq Kalin Bharat*, II, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 2), p. 337.

Side by side the government's efforts was the proselytizing activity of the Muslim missionaries. It is however not clear how far Sufi and other Mashaikh were interested in the work of conversion and what amount of success they achieved in this regard. Following in the footsteps of T.W. Arnold,[8] Titus, Aziz Ahmad and Mujeeb assert that conversions to Islam were mainly a result of the labours of the mystics.[9] On the other hand Mohammad Habib and A.A. Rizvi say that Sufi Mashaikh were not interested in effecting conversions. Prof. Habib says, "The Musalmans have no missionary labours to record.....*We find no trace of any missionary movements for converting non-Muslims* (italies by the author himself). Medieval Islam was a converting creed, but it failed to develop any missionary activity..... So far as our country is concerned we have to confess frankly that no trace of a missionary movement for the conversion of non-Muslims has yet been discovered." In a footnote he adds : "Some cheap mystic books now current attribute conversion to Muslim mystics on the basis of miracles they performed. So in order to believe in the conversions one has to believe in the miracles also. But all such books will be found on examination to be later-day fabrications".[10] Prof. Rizvi arrives at the same conclusion. He simply says that "the early mystic records (*Malfuzat* and *Maktubat*), contain no mention of conversion of the people to Islam by these saints."[11]

From the hagiological literature also it is evident that Sufi Mashaikh were not organized for propaganda work in any modern way.[12] Sufi Shaikhs and scholars are not known to have preceded but always followed the armies of invasion.[13] They mostly lived in metropolitan cities, in their respective *Khanqahs* or monasteries, and do not appear to have moved about in the countryside for propaganda work. The whole atmosphere in the *khanqah* was Muslim, not many, if any, Hindus ever visited them, not to speak

8. T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam, op. cit.*, (IX, n. 11), pp. 264 ff.
9. Titus, *op. cit.* (IX, n. 11), Chapter III entitled "Peaceful Penetration", pp. 36-53. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture, op. cit.*, (VIII, n. 18), pp. 81-84. Mujeeb, *op. cit.*, (X, n. 24), p. 22.
10. K.M. Ashraf Memorial Lecture, *op. cit.* (XI, n. 6), pp. 18-19.
11. S.A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Agra University, 1965), p. 18.
12. Titus, *op. cit.* (IX, n. 11), p. 42.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

of their coming in large numbers for being converted.[14] The two greatest Chishti Mashaikh of the medieval period were Muin-ud-din Chishti and Nizam-ud-din Auliya. Rizvi rightly says that Shaikh Muin-ud-din Chishti "was neither a missionary nor a miracle monger. He did not work among the masses...."[15] In the *Fawaid-al-Fuad*, a biographical memoir on Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya, there is mention of conversion of only two individuals. Similarly during the reign of Iltutmish, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and Qazi Hamid-ud-din Nagori were two prominent saints in Delhi, but no proselytizing activity is attribued to them.[16] Indeed the Mashaikh sometimes resented government's appeals to do proselytizing work; and Muhammad bin Tughlaq, who wanted to employ this class on missionary work, met with lot of opposition from them.[17]

In brief, while it would not be safe to declare that hardly any conversions were effected by the Sufi Mashaikh, it has also to be admitted that not many reliable references to their proselytizing activity are available in genuine hagiological works. They may have helped those who showed any inclination to become Muslims. Occasionally they resorted to force also to convert people.[18] But the Mashaikh were probably responsible only for stray and individual conversions and their contribution to the growth of Muslim population may not have been much. Saiyyad Muhammad bin Nasiruddin Jafar Makki al-Husaini, the Khalifa of Nasirudddin Chiragh-i-Dehli "held that there were five reasons which led the people to embrace Islam :

(1) fear of death,

(2) fear of their families being enslaved,

(3) propagation (of Islam) on the part of Muslims,

14. Rizvi, *op. cit.*, (n. 11), p. 20. Also see Barani, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 11), pp. 343-347.
15. Rizvi, *op. cit.*, (n. 11), p. 15.
16. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, pp. 66-67.
17. Mahdi Husain, *Tughlaq Dynasty*, *op. cit.*, (V, n. 8), pp. 149-50, 160 and also p. 174 and n. 2-3. Also see Kirmani, *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 228.
18. As for instance the efforts of Raja Qatlal to convert Nahawan, the Darvesh of Uch. Jamali, *Siyar-ul-arifin*, (Delhi, 1311 H.), pp. 159-60. Also Ferishtah, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 6), II, pp. 417-18. Also see their militant proselytizing activity in Bengal in Section XIV.

(4) the lust for obtaining *mawajib* (pensions or rewards) and *ghanaim* (booty), and

(5) Tassub (bigotry or superstition ?)."[19] Thus, according to Saiyyad Muhammad, propagation of Islam by Muslims did not necessarily involve missionary activity of Sufi Mashaikh.

Today many classes or groups of people who were originally Hindu are found to belong to the Muhammadan faith, and their conversion can be traced to medieval times. An oft-repeated reason for such conversions is said to be the tyranny of the Hindu caste system. Arnold, Titus and Aziz Ahmad give credit to "the democratic social system of Islam"[20] for the conversion of low caste Hindus to "win a degree of social freedom" because "for the lower Hindu castes acceptance of Islam meant an escape from the degraded status they had in the Hindu society."[21] Dr. Wise thinks that the Muhammadan Julaha (Jolha or Momin) weaver class of Bengal and Bihar belonged to a "despised Hindu caste who in a body became converts to Muhammedanism." Ruben Levy also talks of the "coarse rabble" or Ajlaf in Bengal, who formed the functional groups such as weavers, cotton carders, oil pressers, barbers, tailors etc., as well as converts of originally humble castes in Bengal.[22]

However, contemporary writings of Persian chroniclers nowhere mention caste as a factor leading to conversions. Their evidence shows beyond doubt that conversions in India were brought about by the same methods and processes as seen in Arabia, Persia, Central Asia etc. India was not the first country where Islam was introduced in medieval times. It had spread in Persia, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and North Africa before it came to India. There was no caste system in these countries and yet there were large scale conversions there.

Therefore, a little reflection off the beaten track would show that the reason behind the conversion of some groups *en masse* was not due the oppression of the caste system but the opening of new avenues of employment and economic advancement by the Muslim regime and society. Naturally large numbers of poor people

19. Rizvi, *op. cit.*, (n. 11) p. 46 citing Sijzi, *Akhbar-ul-Akhiyar*, p. 136.
20. Titus, *op. cit.*, (IX, n. 11), p. 36.
21. Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.*, (VIII, n. 18), p. 82.
22. Ruben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam* (Cambridge, 1957), p. 73.

were attracted to Islam as the following Table, prepared on the basis of U.P. Census Report of 1931, indicates.

Table 8

*Showing some Muslim Low Castes of U.P.*[23]

| | Per cent of caste Members adhering to Muslim Religion | Per cent of each Caste in Total Religious Membership |
|---|---|---|
| Julaha | 95.5 | 14.7 |
| Faqir | 93.0 | 12.9 |
| Dhunia | 93.5 | 5.4 |
| Teli | 25.1 | 3.4 |
| Nai (Hajjam) | 26.9 | 3.3 |
| Darzi | 69.5 | 2.3 |
| Qassab | 100.0 | 2.2 |
| Dhobi | 14.0 | 1.5 |
| Manihar | 96.4 | 1.4 |

Like U.P. functional groups many occupational groups in other parts of the country, especially in northern India, too went over to Islam in large numbers in medieval times. Now, did the ancestors of the above Muslim castes convert in medieval times because of the tyranny of the caste system? Let us take the Faqirs first. In Hindu society there is no 'caste' of beggars. But any number of beggars would be 'born' if they could get free food without doing any work. It is stated in almost every chronicle that in medieval times food was very cheap, even so many idlers would have avoided to do work if they could get free food just for a change of name—religion of the poor being the proverbial bread. Muslim regime provided it and Faqirs flocked to it and to Islam. The number of Faqirs had grown so large by the time of Ghayasuddin Tughlaq (1320-25) that the sultan wanted to put a stop to a free treat to them and wanted them to take up some work, but his

23. Compiled from the Census Report of India, 1931, Vol. IX (United Provinces), Part 2.

attitude was resented and the sultan maligned.[24] According to Ahmad Abbas 40,000 beggars used to be fed by Ghayas's successor Muhammad Tughlaq.[25] Muhammad Tughlaq sometimes even attended the funeral of Faqirs.[26] The Faqirs were so well paid under Firoz Tughlaq[27] that some nobles, who used to recommend them to the liberality of the sultan, did not fail to take a 'bribe' out of their gains.[28] Generosity of kings and nobles towards Faqirs never slackened even during the Mughal period. A good number of people would have converted in medieval times to become Muslim Faqirs to form a caste in the Muslim social order in modern times.

Similar was the position with regard to the Qassab. Arab geographers of the ninth to twelfth centuries found most Indians vegetarians. Some Hindus ate game but not flesh of animals and animals were not slaughtered for providing meat.[29] By many Hindus meat is still called 'shikar' (game). The Hindu Gorkhas call it only by this name. Therefore, while it would be difficult to categorically state that Hindus in the pre-Muslim period did not do the work of meat-selling, there does not seem to have been a caste of Hindu butchers which went over to Islam because of the oppression of caste system. The few Hindu butchers might have become Musalmans because their vocation found a flourishing and sympathetic clientele among Muhammadans but many others who were not butchers by profession would have found in cutting and selling of meat a new avenue of employment in a new society and joined it to form a Muslim caste of hundred per cent Qassab.

In the case of *darzis* or tailors, their employment chances lay more with the Muslim community. Muslims dressed elaborately,[30] and the sartorial habits of Arabs and Turks would point to even

24 Barani, *op. cit*, (II, n 11), pp 436-37.
25. Rizvi, *Tughlaq Kalin Bharat*, I, *op. cit.*, (V, n. 32), p. 322. Also Ishwari Prasad, *op. cit.*, (V, n. 17), p. 309.
26. *Masalik-ul-Absar*, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 5), p. 580
27. Barani, pp. 558 59. Afif, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 15), pp. 448-49, 512.
28 Afif, p. 449.
29. Al Masudi, *op. cit* (II. n, I), p. 19.
Al Idrisi, *op. cit*, (III, n. 20), p. 88.
Qazwini, *op cit.*, (IX, n. 2), p. 96.
30. Barani, *op. cit*, (II, n. 11), pp. 273-74.
Afif, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 15), pp. 263.
Also Lal, *Twil'ghi*, (VI, n. 5), pp. 271.

some tailors having come from abroad, and converted Hindu tailors joining their ranks. The requirements of the Sultan,[31] the elite, and even the common Muslims would have needed the services of a whole tribe of tailors, who, passing the whole day in the palace workshops or catering to the needs of the patronizing Muslim society would have found it profitable and convenient to become Muslim. The interdependence of cotton-carders, weavers, (dhunia, julaha) and tailors would have induced the former to embrace Islam, and once some people of this class converted to Muhammadanism, others followed suit because of class affiliation and vocational compulsions. Cotton-carders, weavers, and tailors were there both in the urban and the rural areas; only in the urban they were more skilled and produced fine quality stuffs required by the Muslim nobility and elite, and conversions seem to have occurred mostly in the urban areas; and many village julahas have remained Hindu. A Hajjam does not enjoy a better status in Muslim society than a Nai in Hindu, but the Hajjam's profession provided greater avenues of economic betterment in Muslim society: he did the work of circumcision and other minor surgical operations.

Such instances need not be multiplied, but some other cases not included in the above Table may also be mentioned in passing. Many elephant drivers (mahauts) are today Muslims. It is on record that Muslim rulers were extremely fond of elephants. Mahmud of Ghazni had an elephant corps of 2,500, all collected from India.[32] Minhaj Siraj affirms that during Bakhtiyar's Bengal campaign, many *elephants were captured with their drivers*.[33] He also writes that Sultan Ruknuddin Firoz Shah (son of Iltutmish), "was very fond of.. elephants, *and all the elephant drivers were much benefited by his bounty* (italics mine)."[34] Ferishtah says that by the time of Bahram Shah (A.D. 1240) the sultans had monopolised the

31. Ahmad Abbas says that in the royal workshops of Muhammad bin Tughlaq 200,000 robes of honour were prepared every year for presentation to the nobles alone. In the Sultan's manufactory there were 400 silk-weavers and 500 manufacturers of golden tissues, besides others. *Masalik*, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 5), p. 578.

32. Minhaj, *op. cit.*, (VI, n. 4), p. 83.
Bosworth, *op. cit.*, (IX, n. 3), p. 166.
S.H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History* (Bombay, 1939), pp. 139-40, 146.

33. *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, trs. in E and D, II, p. 315.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 332.

privilege of keeping elephants.[35] Being in the employment of Muslim rulers and nobles, living in the palace or Sultans' forts all the time, and benefiting from their bounty, it was but profitable for them to convert to a faith in which advantages of service and profession lay. One the contrary those professional groups, which had a mixed Hindu-Muslim clientele, but whose business would have been adversely affected by losing the Hindu customers if they had converted to Islam, like the *panwaris* (betel sellers), *halwais* (sweetmeat-sellers), *banias*, goldsmiths etc., did not convert and have remained Hindu through the ages.

Besides, not all low-caste Muslims have converted from low-caste Hindus. Many foreign Muslims also would have been relegated to low caste on marrying low-caste women. The sultans and Amirs usually married in the families of the Rajas and Zamindars they defeated. But the common soldiers or common Musalmans would have married either in their own religious group, that is among the newly converted, or among the low-caste Hindus.[36] And as class distinctions crystallized in medieval Indian Muslim society, these people would have been given only a low caste, having obtained it through their wives.[37] Needless to say that such Muslims, originally of foreign extraction, would have swelled the ranks of low-caste Muhammadans.

Thus the few low caste groups which converted to Islam did so not "to escape from the tyranny of the caste system" because they have remained at as lower a rung in Muslim society as they were in Hindu, but because of new professional and vocational

35. Ferishtah, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 6), I, p. 69.

36 Barbosa, *op. cit.* (VI, n 7), I, p. 74 tells how the Moplahs inter-married with low-castel natives.

37. Such was not the case only with the Muslims. All foreigners who married low-caste persons in this country were counted among low-castes. The case of the early Portuguese in India is an instance in point.

"After capturing Goa, (it became the policy of the Dominican head of the Church, and Albuquerque) at Cochin and Goa of encouraging and subsidizing marriages between native women and the Portuguese Since most of the marriages contracted were between common Portuguese and low-caste natives .....it had the effect of lowering all Christians in the eyes of the higher castes..."

D.F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe, op. cit.* (V, n. 24), I, pp. 230-34.

Also cf. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), III, p 323, for the seventeenth century.

opportunities in a changed society. Such conversions took place mostly in urban areas. Artisans, mechanics, handicraftsmen were loyal to their guilds and their caste. Where guilds were loosely knit and contained many occupational groups or the occupational groups on which the grip of Brahminical hold was lax chances of conversion were more. There was a greater possibility of such a situation in the urban areas and port-towns where there was concentration of Muslim clientele and influence of Muslim religious, political and economic leadership. In the conversions at port-towns, for example, foreign Muslim merchants played a great part. From what we know of their contribution in the conversion of South-East Asia,[35] it stands to reason that their propagandism for Islam in India too would have been very effective. The Zamorin of Calicut, for instance, encouraged the fishermen of Malabar to become Muslamans in order to man his warships; and to this end ordered "that, in every family of fishermen in his dominions, one or more of the male members should be brought up as Muhammadans."[36] Either in deference to the wishes or conditions of his Arab or other Muslim captains and crew, or to see that the men working on the ships under Muslims should have no caste inhibitions, the Zamorin may have issued such orders. But the fact is that today large number of boatmen and fishermen in Bengal and other parts of the Indian seacoast are Muhammadans. Similarly some mercantile groups like Khojas and Bohras also converted to Islam under the influence of foreign merchants, although legendary accounts attribute their conversion to saints.

### Immigration

It was thus mainly conversions that were responsible for the rise and growth of Muslim population in medieval India. This component of growth went on extending with Muslim territorial expansion. Immigration of foreign Muslims too helped in its growth but not to the extent that conversions did. As has been seen at many places earlier, from the inception of Muslim rule right up to the eighteenth century foreign Muslims, especially from Persia and Central Asia, used to arrive in India and settle down here. India was rich and Muslim regime held out pro-

35. D.G.E. Hall, *op. cit.*, (III, n 2), pp 474-85.
36. Arnold, cited in Titus, *op. cit.*, (IX, n 11), p 79.

speets of employment to any foreign Muslim. But in the totality of Indian or even Muslim population their numbers could not have been large, for the total population of the whole of the then Muslim world itself was not very large. Colin Clark estimates that in 1340 the population of Egypt was 3 million, of the rest of North Africa 2 million, of Asia Minor, Syria and Cyprus 11 million, and other countries of south-west Asia 11 million—a total population of about 27 millions.[40] The majority of migrants eame to India from the Central Asian, Afghan and Persian regions whose total population could not have been more than 10 million. The numbers of emigrants from these regions may have, therefore, to be possibly counted only in thousands, not even in tens of thousands. For, to the hazards of journey was added the Mongol terror infesting the whole route to India.[41] In the Mughal period journeys might not have been so dangerous, but the repeated referenees of medieval chronieles to foreign elements in the Indian Muslim population are due not so much to their large numbers as to the important and influential positions they held in government.

### Higher Fecundity

Another important component of growth of Muslim population in India was and is the higher fecundity among Muslims. Kingsley Davis rightly remarks that "in six decades (1881-1941)... at no eensus have the Muslims failed to improve their pereentage and the Hindus failed to lose..." It is due not only to the "proportion of Muslim women married, but those who are married also have a higher fertility"[42] Today every seventh man in the world is a Muslim,[43] and in this great rise of Muslim population their high

40. Colin Clark, *op. cit.*, (III, n. 4), p 64.

41. Hasan Nizami, the author of *Taj-ul-Maasir* (Crown of Victories) who had come to India during the reign of Qutbuddin Aibak graphically describes in his inimitable poetical style the dangers of the journey to Hindustan. He set out from Ghazni for Delhi which to him was the "country of mercy and the altar of wealth . (but there were) the heat of the fiery blast...the wild beasts. the houghs of the jungle were so closely interlaced... A tiger was seen in every forest. In every ravine and plain poisonous serpents were met with. It eame into his thoughts, will the boat of his life ever reach the shores of safety? The erow-like Hindus had intercepted the roads,.. you may say they were demons in human form".
E and D, II, p. 208.

42. Davis, *op. cit*, (I, n. 9), p. 193

43. H W. Hazard, *Atlas of Islamic History* (Princeton, 1954), p. 5.

fertility should have contributed its share. Dudley Kirk, after a detailed study of fertility among various nationalities and religious groups, too, has arrived at the conclusion that birth rate among Muslims is the highest.[44]

About India in particular modern researches in U.P. region give a conflicting picture. Dr. Sinha has found that in Lucknow and Gorakhpur the number of pregnancies per mother was higher among Muslims than among Hindus.[45] But Dr. Husain's findings show wastage in still births among Muslims greater than among Hindus,[46] while Dr. Goyal's survey indicates Hindu fertility in U.P. to be greater.[47] Because of such differences Dr. Ashish Bose could say only this "the evidence on the Hindu-Muslim fertility differential in India is conflicting and nothing can be said with finality on this subject in the present state of knowledge."[48]

But although even for modern times evidence about high fecundity among Muslims is not lacking, in medieval times it was

44. Kirk needs to be quoted at length :
"1. Islamic countries uniformly have high birth rates.
2. These are supported by distinctive Islamic attitudes and practices in family life rather than by political or religious doctrine.
3. The "normal" diffusion of birth control to and within Muslim countries on the European pattern has been inhibited by the cultural discontinuity between Muslim peoples and their neighbours.
4. The continuing high birth rates in Muslim countries, matched with increasing progress in reducing deaths, now lead to rapid population growth and its especially high visibility as a handicap to economic and social progress".
Dudley Kirk "Factors Affecting Moslem Natality" in Olivia Schieffelin (Ed.) *Muslim Attitudes Towards Family Planning*, Demographic Division, The Population Council, Inc., (New York, 1967), p. 79.

45. J.N. Sinha, *Urban Fertility Patterns* (a Survey in the Cities of Lucknow and Gorakhpur), J.K. Institute of Sociology and Human Relations, (Lucknow, 1959), mimeo.

46. I.Z. Husain, *Fertility in Lucknow City*, Demographic Research Centre, Lucknow University, (Lucknow, 1968), p. 20.

47. "A Survey of Fertility and Family Planning in Western Uttar Pradesh", Demographic Research Centre, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi, p. 9 (mimeo.).

48. Ashish Bose, "Differential Fertility by Religion in India" in *Population Problems of India*, Central Family Planning Institute, Ed. by A.R. Kamat—A Symposium held under the Indian Science Congress, 1969 (Delhi, 1969), pp. 78-84, esp. pp. 82-83.

certainly high. Polygamy, multi-marriages, etc. sometimes reached ridiculous limits so "that often the mothers of the sultan's sons could not be indentified",[49] nor perhaps even the children as shown by enquiries made after the death of Alauddin, Mubarak Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughlaq about the existence of their sons. And what is true of the sultans is also true about the elite. Also in the Hindu-Muslim mixed marriages the couple and the progeny invariably became Muslim. Among Muhammadans the widows, even widows of sultans, remarried.[50] But a Hindu widow, even if she did not immolate herself, did not re-marry. Sati and Jauhar added to decimate Hindu numbers. Above all in India, as elsewhere, the growth of population is regulated to a large extent to the material condition of the people. In the medieval period the Muslims—but for the very poor sections—had better lands, more nutritious diet, and, as ruling classes everywhere, were in happier circumstances.

## Lesser Losses

While Muslim population rose through conversion, immigration, and high rate of fertility, its losses in wars and famines were lesser than those of the Hindus, and its natural growth was high.

We have referred at many places to the losses of Muslims in war. But a major portion of Muslim armies consisted of Hindus. Even Mahmud of Ghazni's forces had Hindu contingents. During the Sultanate period Muslims, especially foreign Muslims, belonged to the officer cadre and were mostly cavalrymen, Hindus are often mentioned as Paiks or footsoldiers. The Paiks formed the rank and file and probably the bulk of the Muslim armies. Reference has already made to the large armies of India, both in the North and the South, of Bahmani, Vijayanagar, Mughal. The second volume of Abul Fazl's lists in the *Ain-i-Akbari* give a clear picture of the large number of Hindu contingents that could be called to duty under Akbar. Naturally it is these who were killed in large numbers in wars being placed, as infantry, was then placed, in a vulnerable

49. M. Mujeeb, *op cit.* (X, n. 24), p 207.

50. "The Sultan's (Bahram Shah, son of Iltutmish) sister had been married to Kazi Nasiruddin, but being widowed, the deputy took her to wife". Sultan Nasiruddin's widowed mother was married to Katlagh Khan, Minhaj. E and D, II, pp. 338, 354 respectively.

position.[51] Hindus died in wars of defence of their kingdoms during the unending process of Muslim territorial expansion, and they died in large numbers as members of the Muslim armies. Compared with theirs, the loss of the Muslim numbers was small.

Whenever famines occurred Muslim rulers took prompt and commendable measures to provide relief to the people. But from the narrative of the chroniclers it is evident that these relief measures were mostly confined to urban areas. And Muslims mostly concentrated in urban areas. Even in the cities sometimes the mission of mercy was marred by bigotry. "Between 1387 and 1395 the Deccan was visited be a severe famine, and Muhammad's[52] measures for the relief of his subjects displayed a combination of administrative ability, enlightened compassion, and religious bigotry. A thousand bullocks belonging to the transport establishment maintained for the court were placed at the disposal of those in charge of relief measures, and travelled incessantly to and fro between his dominions and Gujarat and Malwa, which had escaped the visitation, bringing thence grain which was sold at low rates in the Deccan, but to Muslims only."[53] And Mahmud Bahmani was not the only orthodox sultan in medieval India. It may not be proper to generalize, but probably in famines and such like calamities the Muslims suffered less loss than the Hindus.

51. al-Qalqashindi, describing the battle array of Muhammad bin Tughlaq clearly brings this point home. He says, "according to Sirajuddin al Hindi... the Sultan stands in the centre (of the army)...the archers stand before and behind him...In front of him are the elephants. In front of the elephants march the slaves in light dress wearing shields and weapons. They hold the ropes of the elephants while the horsemen are to their right and left...*so that not one of them can run away*." (Italics mine).
al-Qalqashindi, *op. cit.* (II, n. 4), p. 76.

52. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n. 6), I, p. 302 says that the correct name of the sultan is Muhammad and not Mahmud. He also writes that relief measures were undertaken in "large cities and *outlets*" like Gulbarga, Bidar, Khandahar, Ellichpur etc.

53. C.H.I., III, *op. cit.* (II, n. 28), p. 385.

# XIV

## BENGAL—A SPECIAL CASE STUDY OF GROWTH OF MUSLIM POPULATION

Sind and Punjab lay on the route of Muslim invaders. They bore the brunt of so many Muslim invasions for a thousand years from 712 to 1761. In these provinces as well as North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan Muslim immigration too was considerable. Therefore, the extensive growth of Muslim population in this region is understandable. But Bengal, especially eastern Bengal, calls for a special study, for Bengal did not lie on the route of the Muslim invaders. Nor did it form a base of operations for further conquests into India as were Punjab and Sind. But Bengal was another region where the rise of Muslim population was rapid, and probably in the medieval period itself eastern Bengal especially began to have a majority of Muslim population. An explanation for this phenomenon has posed a problem before scholars and demographers. However, as we shall see presently, the overall picture of Islamization in Bengal is quite clear ; only in details it is a little blurred.

The main reason for large-scale conversions in Bengal, as indeed elsewhere, lies in the proselytizing endeavour of its Muslim rulers and ( and this is peculiar to Bengal ) Sufi Mushaikh. Muslim invasions from northern India had started from the early years of the thirteenth century. Bakhtiyar Khalji had invaded Nadia (1203) and Balban had marched (c. 1279-80) as far as Sonargaon in eastern Bengal. The Tughlaqs continued to assert their authority over Bengal and led many expeditions into it. During such campaigns some usual conversions would have taken place. But large

number of Muslims were made under the independent Muslim rulers of Benghal. We have referred earlier to the large-scale conversions effected by Sultan Jalaluddin, himself a renegade, in the early years of the fifteenth century. About these Dr. Wise writes that "the only condition he offered were the Koran or death.....many Hindus fled to Kamrup and the jungles of Assam, but it is nevertheless probable that more Muhammadans were added to Islam during these seventeen years (1414-31) than in the next three hundred".[1]

Moreover, "the enthusiastic soldiers, who, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, spread the faith of Islam among the timid race of Bengal, made forcible conversions by the sword, and, penetrating the dense forests of the Eastern frontier, planted the crescent in the villages of Sylhet. Tradition still preserves the names of Adam Shahid, Shah Jalal Mujarrad, and Karmfarma Sahib, as three of the most successful of these enthusiasts."[2] The story of conversions under independent Muslim kings of Bengal (1338-1576) is not very clear as written records about them are few, but stray references clearly show that "at some times and in some places, the Hindus were subjected to persecution."[3] Tradition credits the renowned Shah Jalal of Sylhet making large-scale conversions. In Mardaran thana in Arambagh sub-division of Hoogly, where the Muhammadan population predominates over the Hindu, there is a tradition that Muhammad Ismail Shah Ghazi defeated the local Hindu Raja and forcibly converted the people to Islam.[4]

Hand in hand with the proselytizing efforts of the rulers was the work of Sufis and Maulvis. From the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq to that of Akbar, Bengal had attracted rebels, refugees, Sufi Mashaikh, disgruntled nobles and adventurers from northern India. The militant type of Mashaikh found in Bengal a soil fertile for conversion, and worked hard to raise Muslim numbers. Professor K.R. Qanungo has noted that the conversion of Bengal was mainly the work of Barah-Auliyas.[5] Professor Abdul Karim

1. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1894, Pt. III, p. 28.
2. *Loc. cit.*
3. *Census of India Report*, 1901, VI, Pt. I, Bengal, pp. 165-181.
4. *Ibid.*
5. "Bengal was not conquered by seventeen Turkish cavaliers (of Bakhtiyar Khalji); but by the *barah-auliyas*, or twelve legendary Muslim militant

has also referred to militant Sufi proselytization[6] But Dr. I. H. Qureshi is the most explicit in this regard. He writes: "The fourteenth century was a period of expansion of Muslim authority in Bengal and the adjoining territories. A significant part was played in this process by the warrior saints who were eager to take up the cause of any persecuted community. This often resulted (in clash) with the native authority, followed, almost invariably, by annexation..."[7] This also shows how elastic were the methods adopted by the Sufis. They acted mostly as peaceful missionaries, but if they saw that the espousal of some just cause required military action, they were not averse to fighting. The Sufis...did not adopt the Ismaili technique of gradual conversion...They established their *khanqahs* and shrines at places which had already had a reputation for sanctity before Islam. Thus some of the traditional gatherings were transformed into new festivals. As a result of these efforts, Bengal in course of time became a Muslim land"...[8]

Stories of forcible conversions in Bengal are narrated by Muhammadan medieval historians themselves with great gusto and we need not dilate upon them.[9] From early times "each seat of

saints, the Pirs who cropped up after the seed of Islam had been broadcast in the plains of Bengal".
K.R. Qanungo, *op. cit.* (X, n. 56), p. 151.

6. Abdul Karim, *op. cit.* (X, n. 20), p. 125, also pp 136-38.
7. On the authority of Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, pp. 68, 70.
8. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (610-1947), Monton & Co, 'S—Gravenhage, 1962, pp. 70-71, 74-75.
9. Here is one such story cited in the Census of India Report, 1901, Vol. VI, Pt. I Bengal, pp. 165-181.

"While the Muhammadan population was still scattered, it was customary for each householder to hang an earthen water-pot (badana) from his thatched roof, as a sign of his religious belief. One day a Maulvi, after some years' absence, went to visit a disciple, who lived in the centre of a Hindu village, but could not find the 'badana'. On enquiry he was told that the Musalman villager had renounced his faith and joined an outcaste tribe. On his return to the city, the circumstances being reported to the Nawab, a detachment of troops was ordered out, the village surrounded, and every person in it compelled to become Muhammadan."

Also See M.L. Roy Chowdhury, "Preaching of Islam in Bengal (Turko-Afghan Period)", in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Twentythird Session, Aligarh, 1960, Pt. I, pp. 168-181, esp. p. 171, where quotations from Bijoygupta's *Padma-Puran* and Jayananda's *Chaitanaya Mangal* show some methodas of forcible conversions.

Government, and each military station was more or less a centre of missionary agitation". We find another agency from across the seas working towards the same end. Arab merchants carried on an extensive and lucrative trade at Chittagong and disseminated their religious ideas among its inhabitants. When Barbosa visited Bengal at the beginning of the sixteenth century, he found the inhabitants of the interior Gentiles, subject to the king of Bengal who was a Moor, while the sea ports were inhabited by both Moors and Gentiles. He also met with many foreigners—Arabs, Persians, Abbysinians and Indians (ptobably Gujaratis). Caesar Frederick and Vincent Le Blanc, who were in Bengal in 1570, also inform us that the island of Sandip was then inhabited by Moors.[10] In the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries Chittagong surely was one of the centres from which unceasing propagandism was carried on. When it is realised how Muslim merchants from India played a major role in the conversion of Mallaca and then the other parts of South-East Asia to Islam,[11] an appreciation of their proselytizing endeavour and achievements in Gujarat, Malabar and Bengal can be easily made.

The methods of conversion employed in Bengal were the same as seen elsewhere in medieval India. But what made Bengal different from many other parts of India as nonresistant and vulnerable to conversions was its peculiar political, religious, and social condition. Politically, Bengal could not withstand Muslim attacks from the very beginning as is clear from the shocking nonresistance of Lakshman Sen to Bakhtiyar Khalji's invasion. But its governors and rulers, due to its geographical location and the unsatisfactory medieval means of communication, mostly remained independent of Delhi, provoking, nevertheless, occasional attacks from the Delhi Sultans. Such emergencies brought the rulers and the people closer to each other. Besides, "throughout the period from the 13th to the 18th century, the northern, eastern and south-eastern frontiers of the Muslim ruled area of East Bengal remained in the fluid condition and the boundaries swung to and fro with tides of fresh conquests .."[12] In such a situation the people looked to the rulers

10 *Voyages de Le Gouvz*, p. 152, cited in Census Report, 1901, *op. cit.* (n 3).
11. D G.E. Hall, *op. cit.* (III, n. 26), pp 177-183.
12. Nafis Ahmad, "The Evaluation of the Boundaries of East Pakistan" in the *Oriental Geographer*, II, No. 2, July, 1958, p. 101.

for security ; in return giving them their loyalty and some even adopting their faith.

Thus the people of Bengal accepted their Muslim rulers as one of themselves, and the rulers on their part adopted and patronised the people's language and literature, art and culture.[13] Translations of many important Hindu works were done at the orders of Muslim rulers,[14] and "as a result of this interaction of Hinduism and Islam curious syncretic cults and practices arose, [there] grew the worship of a common God, adored by Hindus and Muslims alike, namely, Satya Pir. The Emperor Hussain Shah of Gauda is supposed to be the originator of this cult..."[15] Adherents of such cults provided potential converts to Islam. Muslim rulers were keen on increasing Muslim numbers. They could provide jobs and other economic incentives to conversions and, as has been pointed out earlier, Barbosa was struck by the fact that in Bengal "everyday Gentiles turn Moors to obtain favour of the King and Governors". Others converted as the only means of escaping punishment for murder or adultery. Besides, wherever Muhammadan rule existed slavery was developed, "and during the centuries of misrule and oppression, through which Bengal passed, slavery was accepted by the Hindus as a refuge for their troubles. Delhi court obtained not only its slaves [in thousands, as for example under Firoz Tughlaq] but also eunuchs from the villages of Eastern Bengal [a wide-spread practice which the Mughal Emperor Jahangir tried to stop]. The incursions of Assamese Maghs, the famines, pestilences and civil wars...drove them in sheer desperation to sell their children as Musalman slaves".[16]

To such compulsions obviously the very poor and socially backward people would have succumbed. For the rich other methods were brought into operation. The Census of India Report of 1901 says that "the tyrannical Murshid Kuli Khan enforced a law that any Amal, or Zamindar, failing to pay the revenue that was due...should, with his wife and children, be compelled to become Muhammadans", but the practice was much older as vouched by the *Banshasmriti*. Such conversions, as that of the Raja of Samudra-

13. D.C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature* (Calcutta University, 1911), pp. 10, 12, 13-14.
14. Tara Chand, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 14), p. 214.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
16. Census of India Report, *op. cit.* (n. 3) for 1901.

garh, referred to earlier, had a chain reaction. The converted Rajas and Zamindars used to compel others in their lands to become Muslmans for fear of losing their support, nay even for making them their active Muslim supporters. In this regard we have seen the achievements of Sultan Jalaluddin, himself a convert from Hinduism. Kala Pahar, the dreaded iconoclast, and Murshid Quli Khan were Brahman converts. So was Pir Ali or Muhammad Tahir, a Brahman apostate, who "like all renegades...probably proved a worse persecutor of his original faith than others who were Muhammadans by birth." The Census Report of 1901 continues to say : "The present Raja of Parsouni in Darbhanga is descended from Raja Pudil Singh, who rebelled against the Emperor and became a Muhammadan by way of expiation. The family of Asad Khan of Baranthan in Chittagong, has descended from Syam Rai Chowdhari who was fain to become a Musalman....The Diwan families of Pargana Sarail in Tippera, and of Haibatnagar and Jangalbari in Mymensingh, the Pathans of Majhauli in Darbhangha", all sprang from old Hindu houses. They, their propagation, and their progeny added to Muslim numbers.

The religious condition of Bengal too made people vulnerable to Muslim proselytization. The Pala rulers of Bengal were Buddhists and Buddhism, in spite of the damage caused to it by Bakhtiyar Khalji, remained prevalent in the land until at least the fourteenth century. The Senas were Hindus. They patronised Brahmins and Sanskrit. They were destroyed by Bakhtiyar, but not Hinduism. However, the excesses of the Brahmins were unpalatable to the people. Only one example may suffice to illustrate the situation. "To promote the cause of Brahmanism (the Senas) revived Brahmanic rituals with a vengeance, for the elaboration of which a great body of literature was produced under their patronage. Vallal Sen, father of Lakshman Sen, himself wrote the *Danasagar* (in A.D. 1170) which prescribed no less than 1375 varieties of ceremonial charity to Brahmans".[17] There were other aspects of Bengal Hinduism which Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani discusses at some length. He writes that even a casual observer like W.W. Hunter was fain to observe : "As Manu's artificial classification never passed in its integrity beyond the Middle Land to the north, west, or south, so to

17. P. Saran, *Resistance of Indian Princes to Turkish Offensive*, Sita Ram Kohli Memorial Lectures, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, p. 34.

the east, where Lower Bengal begins, there caste as a fourfold classification ceases. In North Bihar, which adjoins the Lower Bengal, it is unknown ; and the population is divided, not into four castes of Manu, but into Aryans, non-Aryans, and mixed classes." This remark of Hunter is verifiable in the Census Report of 1901 in which the entire Hindu population was divided into seven classes for the sake of proper assessment, simply because the fourfold caste system was not operative in Bengal.[18] Thus Brahmanical oppression, fluidity in caste (whose rigidity is said to have stood as a bulwark against proselytization in U.P.), and rivalry between Buddhism and Hinduism,[19] more or less combined to create a situation for people's exposure to conversion.

The social structure of Bengal too was not coalesced. It was a amalgamation of Hindus, non-Hindus, non-Aryan Hindus, and foreigners. The invaders and immigrants from the side of Assam, Tibet and Burma were not Hindus. Abdul Majid Khan even goes on to say : "In fact India or the land of the Hindus ended in Bengal west of the Bhagirathi."[20] The statement is not quite true, but in the Bengal Census Report of 1872 Beverley has explained in great detail the difficulty of settling who are and who are not Hindus, and says that the people put under 'Hindoos', "when classified by religion comprise many who are not Hindoos by race, and scarcely so in any other sense".[21] Dr. Dani on an analysis of the Hindu population structure concludes that while about 38 per cent people are Aryans or of mixed origin, the rest 62 per cent originated from non-Aryans elements. These include Pundras in North and Pods in South Bengal. They have been admitted on all hands to be non-Aryans in origin. "Anthropologists like Thurston and J. Richards have talked of 'pre-Dravidians' also in Bengal. Peter Schmidt has even assumed that there is a common physical relationship among the Munda, the Khasi and the Mon and Khmer speakers of South-East Asia (but this is inconclusive). However, the dark, short and broad-

18. Ahmad Hasan Dani, "Race and Culture Complex in Bengal" in *Social Research in East Pakistan*, Ed. P. Bessaignet, Asiatic Society of Pakistan (Dacca, 1960), pp. 93-110.
19. R.C. Mitra, *op. cit.* (XI, n. 23), pp. 78-79.
20. Abdul Majid Khan, "Research about Muslim Aristocracy in East Pakistan" in Pierre Bessaignet (Editor), *Social Research in East Pakistan*, *op. cit.* (n. 18), pp. 18-25.
21. p. 131, also pp. 96, 129.

nosed people of Bengal are called pre-Dravidian by anthropologists. Tibeto-Chinese or Mongoloids also came into Bengal and have become part and parcel of its people. It is not known when the Bodo section of the Tibeto-Burman branch of these people (Bodo, Mech, Koch, Kachari, Rabha, Garo, Tipra) came to Assam and East Bengal, but are found spread all over North and East Bengal. "This overbearance of the non-Aryan elements has resulted in the great difference in the socio-religious life of Bengalis from the rest of India", in the worship of the female Shakti (power) form resulting in the development of Tantric cult and other related forms.[22]

In brief in eastern Bengal, Chandals and Pods and in northern Rajbansis and Koches predominated ; the proportion of orthodox Hindus was very small. Pods, Chandals and Koches all have traces of Buddhist influence. Among the Koches, traces of Buddhist influence still survived when Ralph Fitch visited the country in the sixteenth century.[24] Muslim religion must have crumbled the defences of Chandals, Koches, Pods and other tribes and low classes who were regarded as outcaste by the Hindus or on whom there was little Hindu influence.

Thus it were the peculiar political, religious, but more especially social conditions of Bengal that exposed its people to Muslim proselytization. Had the common, poor, unsophisticated sections of the lower classes been left to themselves, they might have remained contented with their local forms of devotion and folk culture. But Muslim rulers, soldiers, and Sufi Mashaikh left the high and the low hardly any choice in the matter. The lower classes of course were more vulnerable.

There can, therefore, be no doubt as to the local origin of most of the Muhammadans in Bengal, especially in North and East. Dewan Fazle Rabbi, however, has tried to prove that Bengal Muslims are mainly of foreign extraction. Nothing can be farther from the truth, but before we critically assess his ill-founded thesis, we shall sift the evidence about the local origin of Bengal Muslims which in itself would refute their extra-Indian nativity. Brian Hodgson writes about the voluntary conversion of Koch tribe of North Bengal;[23] Dr. Wise about the tribes about Dacca, and

22 Ahmad Hasan Dani, *op. cit.*, n. 18., pp. 93-110.

23. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1873, Pt. I, p. 210.

24 *Travels on Indian Subjects*, I, p. 108, cited in Census of India Report, VI, Pt. I

Buchanan Hamilton about other tribes, but they all agree that Bengal Muslims are descendants of local inhabitants.[25] "But the most convincing testimony is that afforded by the exact measurements carried out by Mr. Risley. The averege Cephalic index (proportion of breadth of head to length) of 185 Muhammadans of East Bengal is almost identical with that of 67 Chandals. The nasal index (proportion of breadth of nose to height) was greater than that of the Chandals but not very different from the Chandals' half-brothers, the Pods, and in any case a broad nose is characteristic of the Dravidian rather than of the Aryan or Semetic type. These measurements show clearly that the foreign element amongst the Muhammadans of East Bengal is very small.[26] And the appelations and professions of the low class indigenous people did not change with their conversion, as will be clearly seen in the following Table.

Table 9

*Showing Muslim Functional Castes in Eastern Bengal*[27]

| Name of the Group | Where reported | Traditional occupation |
|---|---|---|
| Badiya or Abdul | Bogra | Circumcisers |
| Bajadars | Jessore | Musicians |
| Chunia | Bogra | — |
| Dai | Dacca, etc. | Women act as midwives |
| Dhawa | Bogra and Rajshahi | Fishermen |
| Duffadi | Malda | Hooka sellers |
| Karindi | Jessore | Originally hawkers of glass beads, now engaged in agricultural operations |
| Kathara | Bogra | Originally workers in lead foil used to decorate image of |

25. *Statistical Account of Rangpur*, p. 221, cited in Census Report, *op. cit.* (n. 3).
26. Census Report, *op. cit.* (n. 3).
27. Extract from *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. V, Part I, p. 423.

| Name of the Group | Weere reported | Traditional occupation |
|---|---|---|
| | | Durga, now gold and silver workers |
| Kulu | Bogra, etc. | Oilpressers |
| Kutti | Dacca | Masons, hackney-carriage drivers, etc. |
| Mahifarash | Dacca | Fishermen |
| Manjhi | Bogra | Fishermen and boatmen, now turning to agriculture |
| Mirshikari | Bogra and Dacca | Now goldsmiths |
| Naliya | Bogra | Weavers of reed mats |
| Pirkhodali | Malda | — |
| Punjhra | Malda | Fish sellers |
| Rasua | Jessore | Hawkers of glassware |
| Sanaidar | Dacca | Drummers |
| Sandar | Bogra | Hawkers of glass bangles and tinsel |

In other parts of the old province of Bengal also the general opinion, buttressed by census enumerations, is that the Muhammadans are recruited mainly from local converts. Hence they are in a majority in many places, especially in eastern Bengal, as shown in the Table on the next page.

**Table 10**

*Indicating Percentage of Muslim, Hindu, and the remaining category of population to the total in each district of undivided Bengal and Assam going to East Pakistan according to the Census data of 1941.*[28]

| District | Population (in ooo's) | Percentage of total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Muslim | Hindu | Others |
| Bakargunj | 3549 | 72.3 | 27.0 | 0.7 |
| Bogra | 1260 | 84.0 | 14.8 | 1.2 |
| Chittagong | 2153 | 74.6 | 21.3 | 4.1 |
| Chittagong Hill Tracts | 247 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 95.2 |
| Dacca | 4222 | 67.3 | 32.2 | 0.5 |
| Dinajpur* | 1927 | 50.2 | 40.2 | 9.6 |
| Faridpur | 2889 | 64.8 | 34.8 | 0.4 |
| Jalpaiguri* | 1090 | 23.0 | 50.6 | 26.4 |
| Jessore* | 1828 | 60.2 | 39.4 | 0.4 |
| Khulna | 1943 | 49.4 | 50.3 | 0.3 |
| Malda* | 1233 | 56.8 | 37.8 | 5.4 |
| Mymensingh | 6024 | 77.4 | 21.5 | 1.1 |
| Nadia* | 1760 | 61.2 | 37.4 | 1.4 |
| Noakhali | 2217 | 81.4 | 18.6 | 0.0 |
| Pabna | 1705 | 77.1 | 22.5 | 0.4 |
| Rajshahi | 1572 | 74.6 | 21.0 | 4.4 |
| Rangpur | 2878 | 71.4 | 27.9 | 0.7 |
| Tippera | 3860 | 77.1 | 22 8 | 0.1 |
| Sylhet* (previously in Assam) | 3117 | 60.7 | 36.9 | 2.4 |

*These districts were divided between West Bengal and East Pakistan.

28. Collated from P.C. Mahalanobis "Distribution of Muslims in the population of India in 1941" : *Sankhya : The Indian Journal of Statistics*, Calcutta Vol 7, Part 4, 1946, p. 430.

It may be generally said that almost the whole of the functional groups such as Julaha and Dhunia and the great majority of Shaikhs, probably nine-tenths in Bengal and possibly half in Bihar, are of Indian origin. The foreign elements may be looked for chiefly in the ranks of the Saiyyads, Pathans and Mughals. Even here there are many who are descended from Hindus, because high caste converts are often allowed to assume high titles. "In Bihar a converted Hindu of the Brahman or Kayasth caste is usually allowed to call himself a Shekh (Shaikh) and to associate and intermarry with genuine Shekhs. A Babhan or Rajput in the same circumstances, becomes a Pathan....In Mymensingh high caste converts are given title of Khan and call themselves Pathans.. (Even) the lower castes...after the lapse of some years...are gradually recognised as Shekh."[29] As Nazmul Karim rightly points out : "The pseudo-Syeds have been on the increase not only in India but thoroughout the Muslim world, even from the beginning of Islamic history",[30] and the high titles among Bengal Muslims do not necessarily point to their foreign extraction.

Khan Bahadur Dewan Fazle Rabbi of Murshidabad wrote a book in Urdu entitled *Haqiqat-i-Musalman-i-Bangala*[31] to prove that Bengal Muslims were mainly of foreign extraction. This was done probably to controvert the statement of Beverley in the Census Report of 1872 that "the existence of Muhammadans is due not so much to the introduction of the Moghal blood into the country, as to the conversion of the former inhabitants." Mr. Abu Ghaznavi of Mymensingh, who prepared an excellent account of the Muhammadans of his district, probably in connection with the 1901 census, also supported the foreign origin theory, but he admitted that local converts bulked largely in the total. In Muhammadan histories

29. *Census of India Report*, 1901, VI, Part I, Bengal, pp. 165-161.

30. A.K. Nazmul Karim, "Muslim Social Classes of East Pakistan" in *Changing Society in India and Pakistan*, University of Dacca (Oxford University Press, Pakistan Branch), 1956, pp. 127-30, 138-143. Karim also quotes the well-known saying "*Pehle the kayam Lakam, ab hue pukhtam Sheikh thalla chan-e-rain Aswad, Amal Syed na shud ma*".
(The first year we were brahmins, the next Shaikhs, this year, if proper rites, we shall become Syeds.)

31. Its English translation is also available, entitled *The Origin of the Muhammadans of Bengal*, Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta, 1895.

no mention is made of any large scale Muhammadan immigration from Upper India, and in Akbar's time the climate of Bengal was considered so un-congenial that an order to proceed there was considered a sentence of banishment. Muslims came to Bihar first, but there their number has remained small. Foreign Muslims would not have chosen to settle in the swampy regions of Noakhali, Bogra and Backergunje.

In short, analysing the data collected by Mahalanobis in 1945 about the ethnic groups of eastern Bengal mainly, Majumdar and Rao also arrived at the conclusion that Muslims of Bengal are of indigenous origin mainly from lower classes.[32] These accepted Islam with their local prejudices, minor beliefs, forms of devotion, folk tales and folk cultures, and of course retaining Bengal as their mother tongue. That there was a preponderance of these ordinary people in the Muslim converts of Bengal in medieval times, will be clear if one correctly assesses the modern Census Reports. And this explains the great rise of Muslim population in Bengali which did not lie on the route of Muslim invaders and was also situated far away from the seat of Muslim imperial power.

32. D.N. Majumdar and C.R. Rao, *Race Elements in Bengal*, Asia Publishing House (Bombay, 1960), pp. 74-77.

# XV

## FACTORS WHICH CHECKED ISLAMIZATION OF INDIA

Now, if the components of growth of Muslim population were many, Muslim losses comparately few, and fecundity among them high, the problem that needs investigation is why Muslims have remained a minority in this country and why India, unlike many other countries in the medieval period, was not completely converted to Islam.

### Vastness of the Country

The vastness of the country and its natural and political division into regions and kingdoms made the task of its complete subjugation and conversion extremely difficult. In fact throughout the medieval period at no time was the whole of India under direct Muslim rule. Even in the regions where Muslim rule was firmly established it was thought expedient to leave the countryside alone. Victories provided the Muslim ruling class with the luxuries of the city cultured life, and their interest in rural areas remained confined merely to the collection of land revenue. In the words of Kingsley Davis, "although there were mass conversions, the country was too vast, the invaders too few, and the volume of immigration too small to change the social complex...India, therefore, never became a Muslim nation, but remained simply a Hindu country in which Muslims were numerous".[1]

### Hindu 'Protestant' Movement

Another reason for India remaining a Hindu majority country was the resistance of the people to conversion to Islam. Before

1. Davis, *op. cit.* (f.n. 9), p. 181.

the advent of Islam India had seen the birth and growth of many religions and sects like Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism, Buddhism, Shankara's neo-Hinduism, etc. People had freely 'converted', 're-converted' and at times conformed to more than one religious belief at one and the same time.

But the Hindus could not have liked their co-religionists being converted by conquerors and rulers by force. In fact, as seen earlier, many times Hindus, who were converted to Islam, returned to their former faith on the first opportunity. Harihar and Bukka, converted to Islam by Muhammad bin Tughlaq, reverted to Hinduism and founded the kingdom of Vijayanagar to resist the expansion of Muslim power in the South. Although any return of converts to the Hindu fold was frowned upon by the Muslim rulers, and some Brahmins encouraging converts to return to Hinduism were put to death by Firoz Tughlaq and Sikandar Lodi,[2] yet in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there were conversions on such large scale throughout the country, that for once "the bleeding soul of the Hindus" rose in revolt.[3] The Bhakti saints were the leaders of this 'protestant' movement.[4]

It must be said at the outset that there is no recorded evidence to show that the Bhakti saints of the fifteenth century made any *deliberate* attempt to put a stop to conversions to Islam, or to reconvert people to Hinduism. Still there is good deal of circumstantial evidence to show that their reform movement did help check Muslim proselytizing activity It is significant that the socio-religious reformers associated with the Bhakti movement of the fifteenth century were all Hindus. There is some doubt about Kabir's parentage, but then "the whole background of Kabir's thought is Hindu".[5] Indeed Kamal, the son of Kabir, who "probably had

2. Afif, *op. cit.* (II, n. 15), pp. 379-81. Dorn, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, (London, 1829), pp. 65-66. Ferishtah, *op. cit.* (II, n 6), I, p 182. Also Lal, *Twilight, op. cit.* (VI, n. 5), p 191.
3. *Indian Heritage*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Vol I. (Bombay, 1955), p. 227.
4. Kabir declared: "I have come to save the devotees. I was sent here because the world was seen in misery". Tara Chand, *op. cit.* (VIII, n 14), pp. 150-151.
5. G.H. Westcott, *Kabir and the Kabir Panth* (Cawnpore, 1907), p. 118. "The contrast", observes Ahmad Shah, "of Kabir's intimate Hindu thought, writings and ritual with the purely superficial knowledge of Moslem beliefs

greater leanings towards Islamic ways of thinking", is remembered in the *Ādigranthā* by the disparaging line : "the family of Kabir foundered when Kamal the son was born."[6]

A striking feature of the Bhakti movement was that it gave to the lower class Hindus a respectable position in society. Indeed some of the leaders of this movement like Sain, Raidas, and Dhanna belonged to the lowest classes of Hindu social order. Because of this 'revolution' in which the lowest classes of people, even the untouchables, had not only got an equal status with the highest, but were even revered as saints,[7] there could have been no incentive for the low classes of people to renounce their faith, if they ever had any before "because of Hindu tyrannay," and go over to Islam. As Aziz Ahmad puts it, "like other Bhakti poets his (Kabir's) denunication of the caste-system was as much an inspiration of Muslim example as a response to its pull of conversion."[8] When Kabir denounced caste and ritual of the Hindus, he also denounced the superstitions and rituals of the Muslims ; or, conversely, the idea is best expressed in the words of his disciple Naudhan (whom Sikandar Lodi executed) : "Islam was true, but his own religion was also true."[9] This was an open challenge to Muslim propagandism and proselytization. No wonder that Bhakti reformers were disliked by some Sufi Mashaikh, who looked upon them as competitors.[10] For, under the influence of these saints many Muslims were converted to Bhakti Hinduism. Namdeva,[11] Ramdas, Eknath, Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak and Chaitanya and several other saints had Muslim disciples, many of whom converted to the Hindu Bhakti cult. Chaitanya openly converted Muslims to Bhakti Hinduism.[12] The *Bhaktamala* relates many instances of conversions that Pipa effected.

revealed in the Bijak is too striking to be ignored." Ahmad Shah, *Bijak of Kabir* (Hamirpur, 1917), p. 40.

6. Tara Chand, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 14), pp. 182, 185.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 179, 181.
8. Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 18), p. 146.
9. For details see Lal, *Twilight, op. cit.* (VI, n. 5), p. 191.
10. A.A. Rizvi, *op. cit.* (XIII, n. 113, pp. 57-58.
11. M.G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, (Publications Division, Delhi, 1961), p. 75.
12. D.C. Sen, *Chaitanya and His Age* (Calcutta, 1922), p. 14; Abdul Karim, *op. cit.* (X, n. 20), pp. 150, 202-204;
M.T. Kennedy, *The Chaitanya Movement* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 213.

The effects of the mission of the socio-religious reformers with regard to conversion of people to Hinduism were significant They themselves had adhered to peaceful methods but not their followers in later years. Kabir's disciples spread out throughout North India and the Deccan. Jiwan Das was the founder of the Satnami sect which took up arms against the Mughals. The Sikh disciples of Nanak's successor Gurus, for varied reasons, fought against the Mughals and many times converted people by force. So did the Marathas. Manucci and Khafi Khan both affirm that the Marathas used to capture Muslim women "because (adds Manucci) the Mahomedans had interfered with Hindu women in (their) territories".[13] Chaitanya's influence in Bengal as of Nanak in the Punjab is still great. According to Abdul Majid Khan it is because of Chaitanya's influence in Bengal that large-scale conversions to Hinduism took place at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of nineteenth century.[14]

Thus whether it was their motive or mission or not, the work of the Bhakti reformers helped in checking conversions to Islam and reclaiming many converted Hindus back to their former faith.

Caste System

The Caste system also contributed its mite to the preservation of Hindu social order, indirectly checking proselytization. Some modern writers think that it was the degraded status of low caste Hindus and the social democracy of Islam that were responsible for large-scale conversions to Muhammadanism in medieval times. Many others give the caste system all the credit for saving India from becoming Islamised.

But neither caste was so oppressive nor Muslim society so democratic. Within the steel frame of the caste system some sort of vertical and horizontal mobility was always permitted. There was also a sense of pride in belonging to one's caste whether high or low. However, for any error caste did not fail to punish, and sometimes even ostracized the delinquent whether or not the act of

Tara Chand, *op. cit.* (VIII, n. 14), p. 219.
D.C. Sen *History of Bengali Literature*, *op. cit.* (XII, n. 86), pp. 228-29.
*Indian Heritage*, *op. cit.* (n. 3), I, p. 249.

13. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), II, p. 119.
Khafi Khan, *op. cit.* (I, n. 3), II, pp. 115-18.

14. *Research about Muslim Aristocracy*, *op. cit.* (XIV, n. 20), pp. 23-25.

omission or commission was due to his own fault. In a few such cases conversion was a welcome way out. Therefore some conversions would have taken places because of the rigid caste rules although contemporary accounts are silent on this point. On the contrary this very rigidity served as a bulwark against proselytization and to this contemporary accounts bear witness. To the majority caste was synonymous with religion, and so there was a general reluctance and often resistance to conversion to Islam both by the high and the low caste Hindus.

Let us study the case of the lowest classes first. Alberuni writes at length on the caste system. About the lowest castes, or the so low as to be casteless, he has this to say :

"After the Sudra follow the people called *Antyaja*, who render various kinds of services, who are not reckoned amongst any caste, but only as members of certain craft or profession. There are eight classes of them, who freely intermarry with each other, except the fuller, shoemaker, and weaver, for no others would condescend to have anything to do with them. These eight guilds are the fuller, shoemaker, juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, fisherman, the hunter of wild animals and of birds, and the weaver.....These guilds live near the villages and towns.....but outside them.

"The people called Hadi, Doma (Domba), Candala, and Badhatau (*sic*) are not reckoned amongst any caste or guild. They are occupied with dirty work, like the cleaning of the villages and other services. They are considered one sole class, and distinguished only by their occupations...They are considered like illegitimate children.....they are degraded outcastes...

"Of the classes beneath the castes, the Hadi are the best spoken of, because they keep themselves free from everything unclean..... the Doma...play on the lute and sing. The still lower classes practice as a trade killing and the inflicting of judicial punishments..."[15]

*Vis a vis* Alberuni's list of low castes in the medieval period, is the Table[16] of low castes in modern times prepared on the basis of U.P. Census Report of 1931 :

15. Alberuni, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 2)-1, pp. 101-102.
16. Compiled from the Census Report of India, 1931, Vol. 18 (United Provinces), Part 2.

**Table 11**

*Showing some Hindu low Castes of U.P.*

| | Per cent of caste Members adhering to Hindu Religion | Per cent of each Caste in Total Religious Membership. |
|---|---|---|
| Chamar | 99.7 | 15.1 |
| Ahir | 97.7 | 9.4 |
| Kurmi | 99.7 | 4.2 |
| Pasi | 100 0 | 3.5 |
| Kahar | 99.1 | 2.8 |
| Lodh | 99 7 | 2.6 |
| Gadariya | 99.6 | 2.4 |
| Kori | 99.9 | 2.2 |
| Kumhar | 98.7 | 1.9 |
| Teli | 74.8 | 1.8 |
| Kachi | 99.9 | 1.7 |

The Table clearly shows that most of the lowest castes included in Alberuni's list from Chamar downwards have not only continued to remain Hindu, but, even their caste subsivisions have multiplied. Alberuni has been quoted at length, not because his study of the caste-structure in India is precise, but because he provides the clue to the non-conversion of low caste Hindus to Islam. His notice shows that (a) the caste-system was tyrannical to the low classes, (b) that it was based on craft or profession, and (c) that it was heirarchical.

Caste-system was bad, but it had two compensating features. One was that since the low classes were 'distinguithed only by their occupations' and they intermarried, there was occupational and vocational mobility and also perhaps some sort of social Sanskritization. Another is that it had (and has) an heirarchical structure, and even low caste people feel proud of being superior to some other lower castes, Thus a Teli feels himself superior to an Ahir, an Ahir to a Chamar, a Kahar to a Pasi, and so on. In Bengal, the land of mass conversions, caste pride among low caste Hindus was as pronounced as elsewhere. About the Dom, some-

times also called Chandala, H.H. Risley says that he will eat the leavings of others, but "no Dom will touch the leavings of a Dhobi, nor will he take water...or any sort of food or drink from a man of that caste. "Pods or Chasi, a fishing, cultivating and landholding caste of lower Bengal will eat the leavings of Brahman, but Vaishnava Pods abstain from all kinds of flesh. Rajbansi, a synonym for Koch, wear sacred thread in Bihar.[17]

In fact the lower class people are more particular about 'caste preservation' than even the higher caste ones, and "the Hadi... keep themselves free from everything unclean." A significant point to note is that even the lowest classes had an importance of their own in Hindu society. In Hindu marriage, for example, the co-operation and services of Nai, Dhobi, Kumhar, Kahar etc. were and are as important as that of the Brahmin Purohit. The higher castes depended as much on the lower as the lower on the higher. All castes and non-castes were an essential part of the Hindu social and economic order. Therefore, and in spite of the cruel discrimination, low caste people have been as unwilling to convert as the higher. That is how most of Alberuni's *Antayaja*, as the Census Table above shows, have not converted—the fuller (Dhobi), shoe-maker (Chamar), Juggler (Nat), fisherman (Kachhi, Macchua), hunters and bird catchers (Gadariya), Doma (basket-maker, street dancer, singer). That there are, about 60 million 'untouchable' Hindus to-day is the greatest proof of their ancestors' unwillingness to convert in medieval times.

There is also recorded contemporary evidence of the unwillingness of the low-caste people to voluntarily convert to Islam. Mahmud of Ghazni used to convert people by force, but his contemporary Alberuni (eleventh century) nowhere mentions voluntary conversions of low caste Hindus. Writing about the low class Hindus called Govis (now called Paraiyar) Marco Polo (thirteenth century) says : "nothing on earth would induce them to enter the place where Messer St. Thomas is—I mean where his body lies... Indeed, were even twenty or thirty men to lay hold of these Govis and to try to hold him in the place where the Body of the Blessed Apostle of Jesus Christ lies buried they could not do it."[18] This is

17. H.H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Bengal Secretariat Press, (Calcutta, 1891).
18. Sir Marco Polo, *op. cit.* (V, n. 22), II, p. 335.

the testimony about the South. About North Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (fourteenth century) at many places admits that Hindus "do not embrace Islam", and that "the heart of these people is not changed through sermons."[19] In the seventeenth century Manucci wrote that the low caste people were proud of their caste and were reluctant to convert.[20]

In short, contemporary evidence does not speak of low caste as a factor contributing to conversions to Islam. The presence of a large number of vocational groups among Muslims is due to the fact, mentioned earlier, that Muslim regime and society provided people with new avenues of employment. Those who lacked resources of self-defence during war or those who could not make both ends meet without a change of religion, converted. Among these surely people of low caste predominated. But caste system as such had little to contribute to conversions.

Conversions of high caste Hindus were also few. Hindu religion and philosophy were ancient, vast and deep, and Hindu intellectuals, intelligentia and high castes were proud and even vain, as Alberuni points out, of a highly developed philosophy of their own. It was therefore no easy matter to induce them to convert.[21] It is true that prospects of employment under Muslim government would have provided some incentive for conversion even to high-caste people, and a few instances of conversion for acquring economic and status benefits are on record.[22] But in the early medieval period job opportunities being not unlimited and high offices being monopolised by Turks, or Muslims of foreign extraction, infiltration of and competition by Hindu converts in government service was resented. Cases of Imad-ud-din Rayhan, Nasiruddin Khusrau and Ain-ul-Mulk Multani are instances in point. They are talked of with contempt by the Turkish ruling class. Minhaj Jurjani asserts,

19. Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawaid-ul-Fuad* (Delhi, 1865), pp. 150, 195-97.
20. Manucci, *op. cit.* (II, n. 41), III, p. 173. Also II, p. 238.
21. See the way of Raja Man Singh's refusal to convert in Mujeeb, *op. cit.* (X, n. 24), p. 360
22. Sadharan of Thaneshwar married his sister to Firoz Tughlaq, accompanied him to Delhi, and later became Wajahat-ul-Mulk (Distinguished man of the State).
Sikandar bin Muhammad, *Mirat-i-Sikandari* (Bombay, 1308 H), pp 5-8.
Also S.C. Misra, *Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat*, *op. cit.* (XI, n. 35), pp. 137-39, and Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, *op cit.* (V, n. 8), p. 408.

rather bluntly, that 'Turks of pure lineage and Tajiks of noble birth could not tolerate (Imad-ud-din of) ..the tribes of Hind to rule over them'.[23] Thus the attitude of the foreign-extraction Muslims repeatedly expressed in the diatribe of Muslim chroniclers who usually call them "low born" would have discouraged Hindus to convert even for the allurement of jobs. In the Mughal period Hindus began to be appointed to high posts but for getting these there was no need to convert. Under Aurangzeb some high status people converted to Islam. Manucci states that three Rajas embraced Islam against promises and temptations offered by Aurangzeb, but later they regretted their conversion and remained unhappy[24], because Hindu converts to Islam commanded little respect.[25] Needless to add that lower Hindu castes could not get equality with the other Muslims in the "democratic" Muslim social order. They carried their caste and social status with them even after their conversion and high class Muslims would not mix or even eat with them if modern practices are any indication for the medieval.[26]

From the modern census figures it appears that not many high caste people voluntarily converted to Islam in medieval times. Bohras, Khojas, Ismailis and Mopilahs were, by and large, converted by peaceful methods from to high caste Hindus except perhaps the Mopilahs. But their statistics in modern times show how small their numbers would have been in medieval. According to the census of 1921 there were about 5 million shias, a little over one million Mopilahs ; 382,000 Labbes ; 153,363 Bohras ; and 146,000 Khojas in India (now India and Pakistan).[27] Keeping in view the patronage Persian officers had in Muslim courts in India, it is certain that a good number would have come here from outside in the medieval period. But even with local converts and with centuries of growth in numbers their small figures in modern times point only to a few voluntary conversions in medieval times. The 1931 Census Report of U.P. presents the following picture of Muslim and Hindu high

23. Mushaj, Rosetti, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 4), p. 829.
24. Manucci, *op. cit.*, II, n. 41), II, p. 436.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 457.
26. A.K. Nazmul Karim, "Muslim Social Classes in East Pakistan" *op. cit.* (XVI, n. 50), pp. 129-130, 135-143.
Also I. A. Gait, *Census of India Report*, 1931, VI, pp. 439-442, and *Ibid.* II, p. 544.
27. Aziz Ahmad, *op. cit.* (IX, n. 11), pp. 40, 41, 97, 99, 103, 106.

castes.[28]

Table 12

*Showing High Castes of Hindus and Muslims*

| Muslim Castes | Percent of Caste Members | Percent of Total Religious Membership falling in each caste. |
|---|---|---|
| *Muslim Castes* | | |
| Shaikh | 100.0 | 81.0 |
| Saiyyad | 100.0 | 4.2 |
| Mughal | 100.0 | 0.8 |
| Pathan | 100.0 | 21.4 |
| Rajputs | 4 4 | 2.2 |
| *Hindu Castes* | | |
| Brahman | 99.4 | 10.9 |
| Rajput | 94.2 | 8.5 |
| Vaishya | 92.7 | 2.8 |

It is probable that not all high caste Muslims are of foreign extraction, but the percentage of high caste Hindus clearly indicates that their ancestors were disinclined to convert in medieval times so as to bring out the above picture in modern times.

**Akbar's Regulations**

Political exigencies as well as humanism and religious cosmopolitanism, impelled Akbar to undertake measures which also put a brake on the rise of Muslim numbers through conversion. Briefly stated "the main lines of his policy, (were) directed to obliterating all difference in treatment between Muslims and Hindus".[29] This in itself discouraged conversions to Islam.

It has been seen in the earlier chapter that the largest number of converts were obtained during wars through enslavement. Many people embraced Islam to escape death ; and captive women and

28. Adopted from the Table prepared by Kingsley Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 165, compiled from Census of India Report, 1931, Vol. 18 (United Provinces), Part 2.

29. V. A. Smith, *Akbar, op. cit.* (II, n. 32), p. 48.

children "used to be converted to Islam".[30] But early in his reign (1562) Akbar abolished the custom of enslaving helpless people in times of war.[31] These humanitarian but revolutionary steps would have automatically put a check on large-scale conversions.

Akbar did not give any economic inducements for conversion. On the contrary he removed all modes of economic pressure which sometimes led conversions. He abolished the *Jiziyah* in 1564. Firoz Tughlaq is witness to the fact that its strict enforcement brought many converts to Islam. Akbar was determined to see this tax go, and probably finding that it still lingered in some places issued, in 1579, another declaration reiterating its abolition.[32] Earlier in 1563 he had abolished the Pilgrim Tax on the Hindus.[33]

Thus in Akbar's time, because of the above mentioned and several other similar measures, conversions to Islam by force through enslavement, or economic pressure seem to have been restricted. Even the Mullas and Mashaikh could not have received any encouragement from the government for the work of proselytization. The hope "of obtaining *mawajib* and *ghanaim*" was perhaps still there, but for this conversion was not necessary as posts were thrown open to all without prejudice to religion or creed. Besides the effect on Muslim numbers of the conversions that might still have taken place, was offset by Akbar's order permitting such Hindus as had been forcibly converted to Islam to reconvert to their original faith.[34] All restrictions on Hindu worship and building of temples were also lifted.[35] Although contemporary accounts are silent as to the numbers that went back to Hinduism as a result of this permission; yet the facts that Jahangir severely punished those who adopted Hinduism of their own free will; Shahjahan once again made apostasy from Islam a capital crime; and Aurangzeb did his

30 S. R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, *op. cit.*, (II, n. 37), p. 21.

31. Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, pp. 152-59.
Oral orders for the abolition of this practice were given much earlier.
See Du Jarric pp. 29, 30, 67, 70, 87, 92.

32. R. P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, *op. cit.*, (XI, n. 36), p. 316.

33. *Akbar Nama*, II, p. 160.
Smith, *op. cit.* (II, n. 32), pp. 43-45.

34. Badaoni, *op. cit.* (II, n. 40), II, 317.

35. Du Jarric, *op. cit.* (n. 31), p. 75.

best at Muslim proselytization show that people were taking advantage of Akbar's orders. Probably Akbar had only removed obstructions in a practice which was probably always prevalent. All these measures removed pressure on the Hindus to embrace Islam. Obviously conversions should have become rather scarce.

Christian Missionaries

The arrival of Christian missionaries also helped check Muslim proselytization. Vasco da Gama landed in India in 1498. In 1510 the Portuguese captured Goa, in 1531 Diu, and in 1534 Daman. In the triumphal entry into Goa, "the clergymen were at the head of the procession."[36] Muslim proselytizing activity not only received a check but a challenge at the hands of these Christian missionaries.

The agencies of conversion to Christianity were intercommunal marriages, force and enslavement, and missionary endeavour. Portuguese missionary activity was well organised and quite effective. In Goa, Albuquerque encouraged his soldiers to marry in the families of Turkish officers.[37] To promote mixed marriages, Portuguese with Indian wives, as well as neoconverts, were treated as a privileged class for appointment to petty offices.[38] Force was also openly used for obtaining converts.[39] "In 1560, the year the Inquisition was set up. 13,092 Hindus were forcibly converted. In 1578, the ... missionaries pulled down 350 temples and converted 100,000 people".[40] Similar, and in some cases worse, treatment was meted out to Muhammadans. Consequently by 1583 Goa had by and large become Christian, while Salsette had a Christian population of 8,000. After Goa, Cochin was the next Mission Centre. By 1570 there were more than twentyfive Christain stations in Travancore and about 15,000 converts. In 1600 centres in Travancore had risen to fifty. Converts on the Fishery Coast alone are estimated from 90,000 to 130,000.[41] Christian Missions made successful efforts in converting low caste people. Appreciative of the attitude of the Indian people, Henrique

36. R. P. Rao, *Portuguese Rule in Goa*, *op. cit* (II, n. 34), p. 34.
37. T. B Cunha, *Goa's Freedom Struggle*, p. 11.
38. Rao, *op. cit.*, (II, n 34), p. 31.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
40. *Ibid* , p. 44.
41. Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), I, pp. 264, 265, 271.

advised Loyola ....."It is better in India to baptize all those of one caste than different individuals taken from various castes".[42]

In times of famine they bought children, and even men and women, and sold them at high prices, but "Portuguese under pain of severe punishments, are forbidden to sell heathen slaves to Muslims, since heathens are converted more easily to Christianity under Portuguese and to Islam under Muslim ownership."[43]

The capture of Goa by the Portuguese was facilitated by Hindu cooperation. Some Hindu chiefs of Goa invited Albuquerque to help them relieve "the Hindu population from the fanatical oppression of Adil Shah's governor at Goa."[44] In the Vijayanagar empire relations were generally good between Hindus and Christians, who were united if for no other reason, by the common hostility to Muslim.[45] All this facilitated Christian missionary activity in the South. In the North, the Mughal Emperor Akbar invited Portuguese missions and permitted Jesuit Fathers to convert people to Christianity. They had their Mission Centres in as important places as Lahore, Delhi, and Agra.[46]

It hardly need be asserted that wherever the Portuguese went, the Muslim proselytizing endeavour received a severe blow. Muslim numbers even were depleted. Barbosa gives a graphic account of Rander in Gujarat with its rich Muslim merchants, their high style of living, and their richly decorated mansions. Danvers narrates its destruction by the Portuguese. Muslim trade and population were so adversely affected by the arrival of the Portuguese that Barbosa laconically comments : "Now [the Muslims that] there are do not live independently."[47] What Barbosa has said about Malabar, may be said about India as a whole. Barbosa contends that the coming of Portuguese alone prevented Malabar from becoming a Moorish state.[48] It may as well be said that the coming of European nations and the establishment of British rule prevented India from becoming a Muslim land.

42. Henrique to Loyola from Bombay, October 31, 1548. J. Wicki (ed.) *Documenta Indica* (Rome, 1960) III, p. 599. Cited in Lach, I, p. 442.
43. Lach, I, pp. 239, 457.
44. Rao, *op. cit.* (II, n. 34), p. 29.
45. Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), I, p. 370, on the authority of Danvers.
46. Smith, *op. cit.* (II, n. 32), pp. 189-90, 209-210.
47. Barbosa, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 17), II, p. 78.
48. Ibid., p. 74.

# XVI

## SUMMING UP

India is, and always has been, a highly populated country. Today India and Pakistan have about 18 per cent, or almost a fifth of the world's population. They have more people than all of Europe exclusive of Russia, and almost as many as in the continents of Africa, North America, and South America combined. At least three out of every four persons in the British Empire before partition were Indians.[1]

Similar was the position in earlier centuries. Muhammad Sharif Hanafi, the author of *Majalis-us-Salatin*, writing in early seventeenth century (A.D. 1628), says "that the whole country of Hindustan... is known to form one-fourth of the inhabited world, and reckoned as largest of all the countries."[2] Hanafi's information or impression was not wide off the actual position.

We have referred to Lach Tables at many places. The first Table contains 'some relevant population figures for seventeenth century Europe' based on the tables of M. Humbler, H. Bunle, and F. Boverat, *La Population de la France, Son evolution et ses perspectives* (Paris, 1950 ?), pp. 22-23, and M. Reinhard, *Historie de la population mondiale* (Paris, 1949). This Table (to which have been added our own estimates for India) is as follows :

1. Kingsley Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 17.
2. E and D, VII, pp. 137-38.

Table 13

*Showing comparative population estimates of India, Europe and the World*

| Date | World | Europe | Our Estimates for India |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1650 | 465,000,000 | 100,000,000[2] | 150,000,000 |
| 1750 | 660,000,000 | ,000 | 172,500,000 |
| 1800 | 840,000,000 | 175,000,000 | 170,000,000 |
| 1950 | 2,350,000,000 | 540,000,000 | 430,000,000 (India and Pakistan) |

It may be noticed that Europe between 1650 and 1800 had a population of about one-fifth the world's total; India's population proportion was probably higher during this period because population of Europe rose at a high rate only after the Industrial Revolution. For the same reason estimates for earlies centuries for India are also not high; only India's population registered constant rise and fall. But it remained high.

There were a large number of factors contributing to the high rate of population growth in medieval India. At present Asia's rate of growth is higher than the world rate and that by about one-third.[3] The same appears to be true for the medieval times. Among the Hindus it was a social obligation to marry and almost a religious duty to have progeny. Muslim religious law sanctioned multi-marriages. Women's level of culture was low and of education almost nil. Their one function and ambition was to produce children. "Family planning" was not known to the medieval world; in India the craze for children, particularly male children, was "the more the merrier". It was customary with presents to marry off their children at an early age, sometimes even while they were mere infants. Akbar's orders, fixing the minimum marriageable age for girls at fourteen and for boys at sixteen[4], speak for themselves.

3. Also A.M. Carr-Saunders, *The World Population* (New York, 1936), pp. 29-32. According to Colin Clark, however, the population of Europe (minus Russia?) was 83.6 million in 1600 and 90 million in 1650. Clark, *op. cit.* (III, n. 4), p. 64.

4. Jitendra Mohan Datta, "A Reexamination of Moreland's Estimate of Population of India at the Death of Akbar" *op. cit.* (I, n. 10), p. 160.

5. Badaoni, *op. cit.* (II, n. 40), II, p. 306.

The hot climate of the country helped in the growth of population. A pitiless sun is a natural germicide. Foreign travellers testify to the fact that India was not vulnerable to disease which wipped off whole populations in Europe.[6] It is also on record that Indians, especially those who were vegetarians, lived for long.[7] Fresh air, hot and healthy climate, physical work and availability of food at cheap rates were assets to promotion of good health in medieval times. Unhealthy surroundings and accidents concomitant with modern mechanized industrialization and fast transport were then not known.

In Akbar's times, we find a deliberate effort also made to give peace and protection to agrarian population. Such a policy, initiated in Sher Shah's time and continued in Akbar's, was bound to produce good results on population. Two centuries earlier when Firoz Tughlaq had undertaken measures to help the tillers of the soil, Shams Siraj Afif had not failed to notice a rise in the country's population.

But if there was accelerated population growth, there were also forces pulling in the opposite direction. In Europe in the sixteenth century population was checked by malnutrition and disease. Half of all babies born died in the first year; in India female infanticide added to high infant mortality. Life expectancy in Europe was 48 to 66 years in rich countries; 30 to 40 years in poor. In India birth rate was high, death rate was high and life expectancy low.[8] Wars and famines and pestilences were common in medieval times. The devastating effects of war were aggravated by the customs of Jauhar and Sati.[9] In Jauhar not only women but also children used

6. It is exceedingly significant that Megasthenes in the ancient times and Nicolo Conti in the fifteenth century are impressed by the fact that Indians are comparatively free from diseases. What Conti writes is interesting. He says that "pestilence is unknown among the Indians; neither are they exposed to those diseases which carry off the population in our countries: *the consequence is that the number of these people exceeds belief....*" Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 7), p. 32.
7. Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (I, n. 1), p. 161.
8. Also Lach, *op. cit.* (V, n. 24), I, pp. 432-33.
9. "We have from Fedrici's pen one of the fullest and most authoritative accounts of the...practice of Sati prepared in the sixteenth century", because the house in which he lived was located near the gate through which, after the Battle of Talikota, women passed on their way to be burnt. *Ibid.*, I, p. 471.

to be burnt or put to the sword on a large scale.[10] About famines we hear throughout the medieval times. The country depended almost entirely on monsoon for its food production, and "it is the irregularity of monsoon that has made India a land of famine."[11] Similarly when any contagious disease broke out, there were hardly any means to check it, and it always took a heavy toll. Medieval times were not a healthy period from the point of hygiene and sanitation. Rural habitations and suburban dwellings were yet mere hovels, flimsy structures, easy victims to accidental conflagration and contagious disease. In such a situation population growth could only be restrained. The present day population explosion is due mainly to the advancement in medical science promoting longevity.

The harem system, so common in the medieval elite society, was also a great check in the over-growth of population. Multi-marriages, say having three or four wives, meant many children in the family, but not in a large harem. Let it be explained with the help of an example. Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, the Prime Minister of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, had 2,000 women in his harem. Now if each one of these two thousand would have been married separately to two thousand men, they would have produced a large number of children of which a few thousand would have surely survived. But being in the possession of one man, they did not add as many to the population as otherwise they would have done. Besides, possession of a large number of women by one man would have deprived many others from obtaining wives, because there is no evidence to show that in medieval India the number of women was larger than that of men. Therefore, because of the harem system, many men would have perforce remained bachelors and some made eunuchs to serve in the seraglios, adding no numbers to the population. In harem, sex was probably secondary, intrigue the primary activity. From the time of Shah Turkan to that of Roshan Ara there are references to one woman being the 'political' rival of another, and removal of the opponent by poison was not uncommon. Also, since the first-born had greater legitimacy to succession, his mother

10. For example, G.N. Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, op. cit., I, p. 24, pp. 76-7 for the North and Nunis in Sewell, op. cit. (II, n. 21), p. 282 ff. for the South.

11. Davies, op. cit., I, n. 9, p. 11.

ever tried to see that the other wives aborted.[12]

However, when a balance is struck, it is almost certain that deaths were fewer than births and India's population had a natural tendency to grow. There were no doubt many checks on the overgrowth of numbers, but the India of medieval times was known for its large population.

So far as Muslim population is concerned, its growth in medieval India was constant. While it was only about A.D. 1000 that Islam did really get introduced in India, the population of Muslims in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent was no less than 100 million around 1950.[13] In the medieval times, India was under Muslim rule, or at least large portions of the country were controlled by a succession of Muslim dynasties. Political authority is always in a position of vantage to enlist supporters, and religions have spread in many places and at many times the world over through the interest and effort of the ruling power. But the picture of conversions which swelled Muslim numbers so quickly is too hazy to reconstruct. It is said that Hindu caste system, proselytizing activity of Sufi saints, contact with Muslim traders and merchants, job opportunities in Muslim civil and military establishments, resulted in 'group conversions' of Hindus. These are reasonable suppositions, although documentary evidence on these is little. The only reason of conversion repeatedly mentioned in medieval Persian chronicles is that Muslim conquerors and rulers converted men, women and children either by naked force or by putting upon them economic and other kinds of pressures. However, as M. Mujeeb points out "the risks involved in a policy of conversion by force should not be underrated."[14] Be that as it may ; one fact is patently clear. The vast majority of Muslims of India (and Pakistan) are converts from indigenous elements, and the 'two nation theory' has no historical basis.

In northern India Muslim population rose gradually after A.D.

12. Tavernier, *op. cit.* (VII, n. 29), I, p. 393
13. Indian and Pakistani Census Reports for 1951. Also Davis, *op cit.* (I, n 9), p. 191.

    Today every seventh man in the world is a Muslim. Their total in 1950 was 365 million.

    H.W. Hazard, *Atlas of Islamic History* (Princeton, 1954), p. 5. Titus, *op. cit.* (IX, n. 11), p 1
14. M. Mujeeb, *op. cit.* (X. n. 24), p. 22.

1000. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as well as in the seventeenth, especially under Aurangzeb, its rise was at an accelerated pace and throughout the country. In most regions where Muslims were found in good numbers by the year 1500, their population, by and large, went to growing in later centuries too. But surprisingly enough in some of these regions it actually fell. This was due as much to the tenacity of the Hindu social order which "lapped away at any intrusive system as the sea laps away at a sand bank",[15] as to the new challange of competition from Christian proselytizers. In other parts of the country also the Muslims could not make such headway. This situation has continued right up to modern times. A comparison of some figures of 1941 census, given in the following Table, would bear this out.

Table 14

*Showing Regional Distribution of Muslim Population in 1941.*[16]

| Provinces and States | Population | Percentage | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Muslims | Hindus | Others |
| A | | | | |
| Baluchistan | 501,000 | 87.6 | 8.8 | 3.6 |
| N.W. Frontier | 3,038,000 | 91.8 | 5.9 | 2.3 |
| Sind | 4,535,000 | 70.7 | 27.1 | 2.2 |
| Punjab | 28,418,000 | 57.1 | 26.6 | 5.1 |
| Kashmir | 4,022,000 | 76.4 | 20.1 | 3.5 |
| Bengal | 60,307,000 | 54.7 | 41.6 | 3.7 |
| B | | | | |
| U.P. | 55,023,000 | 15.3 | 83.2 | 1.5 |
| Bihar | 36,341,000 | 13.0 | 73.0 | 14.0 |
| Orissa | 8,728,300 | 1.7 | 78.3 | 20.0 |
| C.P. & Berar | 16,514,000 | 4.7 | 76.9 | 18.4 |

15. Davis, *op. cit.*, n. 9, p. 195.

16. Adapted from the Table given in "Distribution of Muslims in the Population of India" by P.C. Mahalanobis in *Sankhya* (The Indian Journal of Statistics), Vol. VII, August 1945, *pp.* 429-34.

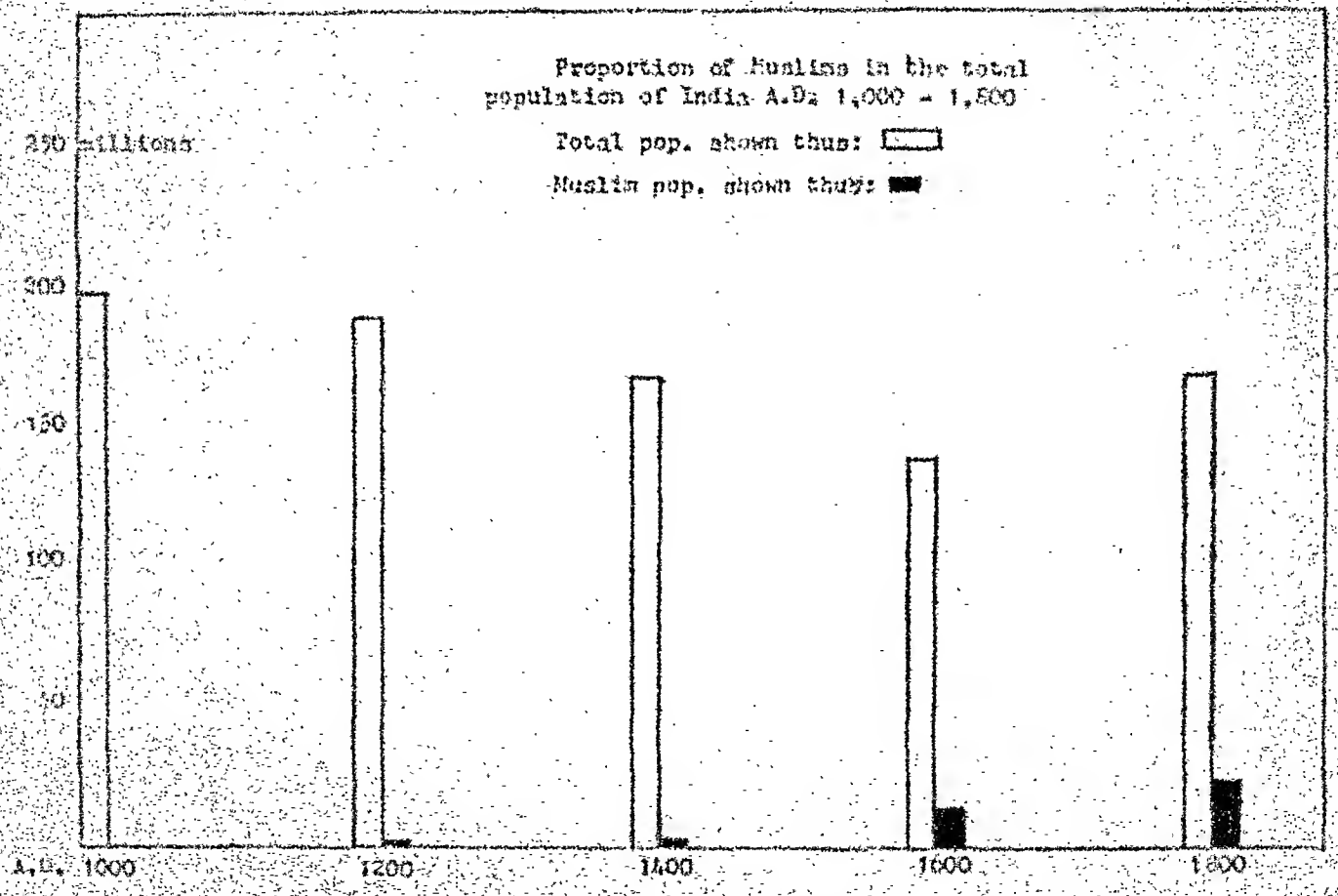
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | | | | |
| Trnvancore (Malabar) | 6,070,000 | 7.7 | 58.4 | 34.4 |
| Cochin | 1,423,000 | 7.7 | 63.0 | 29.3 |
| Gujarat | 1,457,000 | 3.9 | 52.4 | 43.7 |
| D | | | | |
| Banaras | 451,000 | 8.4 | 90.7 | 0.9 |
| Rampur | 477,000 | 49.3 | 49.9 | 0.8 |

It will be observed that in Group A the regions which had a large Muslim population about the end of the fifteenth century, became Muslim-majority areas as years went by. In Group B regions the Muslims were in lesser numbers and continued to remain so. Group C is interesting. In the fifteenth century, the western coast region had a large Muslim population, but from the sixteenth century onwards Portuguese traders began to oust Muslim merchants and Portuguese and other Christian missions outstripped Muslims in proselytizing activity (many Muslims themselves becoming Christians), so that in years to come Muslim numbers fell. Group D illustrates the fact that in a princely state under British rule, if the ruler was a Hindu, proselytization to Islam did not find encouragement. If he was a Muslim, the number of Muslims grew.

In modern times too in the sub-continent as a whole at no census have the Muslim numbers failed to improve, or the Hindu failed to lose. This phenomenon has been attributed, besides proselytization, to polygamy, remarriage of widows, and higher fecundity among the Muslims.[17] Datta also mentions factors such as "*Pax Brittanica* and their (Muslims') occupying more fertile lands in the Eastern Bengal and the canal irrigated lands in Western Punjab and Sindh",[18] and Davis thinks it to be due to the Hindus having taken to western education and secularism with alacrity as against the general backwardness of the Muslims.[19] But in the medieval as in modern India, the Muslims have remained a clear minority as is seen in the following diagram.

17. Beni Prasad, Modern Review, 1921, *op. cit.* (VI, n. 88), p. 17n. Also Hazard, *op. cit.* (n. 13), p 5.
18. J.M. Datta, Modern Review, January, 1948, p. 34.
19. Davis, *op. cit.* (I, n. 9), p. 193.

*Diagram Showing Muslim proportion to total Population*



# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

## LOSS OF INDIAN POPULATION DURING MAHMUD GHAZNAVI'S INVASIONS

Mahmud of Ghazni invaded India seventeen times. These invasions have been discussed in detail by Professor Mohammad Habib,[1] Dr. M. Nazim,[2] Sir Wolseley Haig,[3] and Sir Henry Elliot.[4] We are here concerned only with the loss to the Indian population, that is, the loss of numbers in killed or carried away as captives out of the country in the course of these invasions, and with no other details or controversies. The figures in the following résumé of the invasions have, therefore, been taken from Elliot and Dowson's work in which Elliot has sifted all available evidence and has given figures provided by contemporary and later chroniclers. The figures given by Utbi have been collected from Elliot as well as Reynold's translation of the *Kitab-i-Yamini*.[5] Original sources and authorities which provide the data have also been cited.

At the end the figures of the killed, carried away as prisoners etc. have been consolidated. Where no figures are available, the columns have been left blank, or our own estimates have been given within brackets followed by marks of interrogation.

Mahmud Ghazni's Invasions, A.C. 1000-1030.

1. Frontier Towns, A.D. 1000.

After taking many forts and provinces, Mahmud appointed his own governors. No figures of killed or captured are given (T.A., Ferishtah).

2. Peshawar, Waihind, A.D. 1001-02.

Against Jayapal whose army consisted of 12,000 cavalry, 30,000 infantry and 300 elephants, 15,000 Indians were killed. Captives

1. *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, *op. cit.* (IX, n. 20), pp. 23-59.
2. *The Life and Times of Mahmud of Ghazna* (Cambridge, 1931), pp. 42-122.
3. C.H.I., (I), *op. cit.* (II, n. 25), pp. 13-26.
4. Elliot D, *op. cit.* (I, n. 2), II, Appendix, pp. 434-78.
5. *Op. cit.* (IX, n. 1), pp. 14-51.

taken by Mahmud 500,000 of both sexes (Utbi). Elliot's figure is 5,000 killed (vol. II, p. 438)

Then Mahmud captured Waihind...Figures of the killed and captured have not been given by any chronicler. It may be presumed that a number equal to the one killed at Peshawar was killed at Waihind also because it was "a very important and thickly populated city."

3. Bhera (Bhatia) A.D. 1004-05.

The city was as wealthy as imagination can conceive in property, armies and military weapons. Fighting for four days and nights. Number of casualties not given. Raja Bijai Rai committed suicide. "The army of the Sultan moved on, committing slaughter and pillage...(and captured) usual share of property. He remained at Bhatia till he had cleaned it from pollution." All the inhabitants of the palace, except those who became converts to Islam, were put to the sword (Utbi).

4. Multan, A.D. 1005-06.

Ibn Asir, Mir Khwand and Haider Razi make the ruler Daud flee to Ceylon. Utbi says that a fine of 20,000,000 dirhams was levied from the inhabitants (Even if an average of 100 dirhams paid for each man, it should be a town of about 200,000 people).

Unsuri informs that on the way at Multan Mahmud took 200 forts (killing 200,000 in the process). According to Utbi Mahmud marched on indulging in "slaughter, imprisonment, pillage, depopulation and fire."

5. Against Nawasa Shah A.D. 1007.

After defeating Nawasa Shah, Mahmud "cut down the harvest of idolatry with the sickle of his sword and spear." This and the previous victory (at Multan) were witnesses "to his exalted state of proselytism" (Utbi). But no figures of the slain or captured are given.

6. Waihind, Nagarkot, A.D. 1008-09.

Utbi. Battle at Waihind and then fight with Brahmapal, the son of Anandpal and "grinding stone of slaughter revolved." Battle from morning till evening. The victors slew the vanquished wherever they were found (in retreat ?) in jungles, passes, plains and hills. March towards Nagarkot. Fort of Bhimnagar captured with immense booty.

Ferishtah. Mahmud marched against Anandpal. Rajas of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar, Delhi and Ajmer joined Anandpal. Fighting near Peshawar. Gakkhars had also joined. About 30,000 infidel Gakkhars penetrated Mahmud's lines. Anandpal's elephant fled. 8,000 Hindus were killed in the retreat. (How many in various battles ? 25000 ?) No figures given.

7. Tarain, A.D. 1010.

Utbi. "Friends of God committed slaughter in every hill and valley." Sultan returned with plunder. After it Jaipal offered an Indian contingent of 2,000 men as part of the annual tribute. The troops were sent at least for the next five years (there is evidence that they were sent in 1015).

8. Multan, A.D. 1011.

Mirat-i-Masudi. After this second invasion and plunder of Multan, it was deserted. Anandpal fled to Ucch.

9. Nanduna, Kashmir Valley, A.D. 1014.

T.A. : Mahmud "obtained great spoil and a large number of slaves." Figures of the killed not given. About prisoners of war Utbi says, "and slaves were so plentiful that they became very cheap; and men of respectability in their native land (India) were degraded by becoming slaves of common shopkeepers (in Ghazni)"

10. Thanesar, A.D. 1015.

Utbi : "The blood of the infidels flowed so copiously that the stream was discoloured...and people were unable to drink it. The Sultan returned with plunder which it is impossible to recount". But he does not give any figures. Ferishtah : "On this occasion the Muhammadan army brought to Ghaznin 200,000 captives, so that the capital (Ghazna) appeared like an Indian city, for every soldier of the army had several slaves and slave girls"

11 Lohkot, A.D. 1016.

Ferishtah : "The Sultan suffered much because of the snow in Kashmir Returned.

12. Kanauj, Mathura, A.D. 1018-19.

Utbi. Khwandmir. Nizamuddin, Ferishtah. Mahmud takes Baran, crossing the Jumna takes Mathura, and then recrossing the river proceeds to Kanauj.

Number of killed not given but considering the description of the battle must have been considerable. "Many infidels were...slain or taken prisoners in this sudden attack, and the Musalmans paid no regard to the booty till they had satiated themselves with the slaughter of the infidels."

In Mahaban "nearly 50,000 were killed and drowned" (Utbi). Much booty with slaves collected.

On his return march to Kanauj, "the Sultan levelled to the ground every fort... He colle-eted so much booty, prisoners and wealth, that the fingers of those who counted them would have been tired." (Utbi).

In Kanauj proper "many effected their escape" and "were scattered abroad" and "those who did not fly were put to death." Soldiers were given leave to plunder and take prisoners.

In the fort of Munj, Manj, or Manaich which held out for fifteen days (Ferishtah), most people were killed and many others while escaping Similar things happened at Asi (Utbi).

On return to Ghazni the booty was found to consist (besides huge wealth) 53,000 captives (T.A.). But Utbi is more detailed. *He says that "the number of prisoners may be conceived from the* fact, that each was sold for from two to ten dirhams. These were afterwards taken to Ghazna, and the merchants came from distant cities to purchase them, so that the countries of Mawarau-n-nahr, Iraq and Khurasan were filled with them". The Tarikh-i-Alfi adds that the fifth share due to the Saiyads was 150,000 slaves. If that be true the total number of prisoners was 750,000.

**13. Battle of Rahib, A.D. 1020-21.**

Figures of killed, captured etc., not given but "some of the infidels asked for mercy after being wounded, some were taken prisoners, some were killed, and the rest took to flight (Utbi). Immense booty fell into the hands of the Musalmans (T.A.) which must have included prisoners.

**14. Kirat, Nur, Lohkot and Lahore, A.D. 1021-22.**

Mahmud first attacked Kirat. Sahin Ali ibn Ilar was sent to reduce Nur. Lohkot in Kashmir was attacked but without much success. Lahore and its neighbouring country was occupied. From now Punjab formed a province of Mahmud's empire. (T.A.).

**15. Gwalior/Kalinjar A.D. 1022-23.** No figures available.

16. Somnath A.D. 1025.

On the way to Somnath Mahmud came upon "several forts... He killed the people who were in these places;...(later) he met 20,000 fighting men..., put them to flight and plundered their possessions. (Then) marched to Dabalwarah...Mahmud took the place and slew the men."

At Somnath there was a "fearful slaughter." "A dreadful slaughter followed at the gate of the temple". At Somnath "the number of the slain exceeded 50,000" (Ibn-ul-Asir).

After Somnath, Mahmud marched against Raja Bhim, chief of Nahrwala. "His whole property, with numerous prisoners, fell into the hands of the army of Islam. All men who were found in the fort were put to the sword".

17. Against Jats of Jud, A.D. 1026-27.

Most of the Jats were drowned, and those who were not so destroyed were put to the sword. The Sultan's army proceeded to the places where their families were concealed, and took them all prisoners. (T.A.).

Table 15

*Showing Loss of Indian population during Mahmud Ghazni's invasions*

| S. No. | Region | killed | carried away as prisoners |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Frontier Towns | —— | —— |
| 2. | Peshawar | 15,000 | 500,000 ? |
| | Waihind | (15,000) 5,000 ? | —— |
| 3. | Bhera | —— | —— |
| 4. | Multan | (200,000) | —— |
| 5. | Punjab | —— | —— |
| 6. | Waihind, to Nagarkot in various battles | 8000 25,000 ? | —— —— |
| 7. | Tarain, Indian troops sent to Ghazna 5 years (2,000 each year) | 10,000 | —— |
| 8. | Multan | Town deserted | —— |

| S. No. | Region | killed | carried away as prisoners |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9. | Kashmir | —— | Large number, sold very cheap in Ghazni |
| 10. | Thanesar | Large number | 200,000 |
| 11. | Lohkot | —— | —— |
| 12. | Baran | —— | —— |
| | Mahaban | 50,000 | —— |
| | *Mathura* | —— | —— |
| | Kanauj | —— | large numbers |
| | Munj & Asi | Most killed | |
| | Total | (150,000 ?) | 53,000 (T.A.)<br>750,000 (Alfi) |
| 13. | Rahib | —— | —— |
| 14. | Kirat and other places | —— | —— |
| 15. | Gwalior | —— | —— |
| | Kalinjar | | |
| 16. | Dabalwarah | —— | —— |
| | Somnath | 50,000 | —— |
| | Anhilwara | All in the fort | A large number |
| 17. | Jat | Many | families of Jats |

The figures of killed and prisoners of war carried away by Mahmud of Ghazni, as given by contemporary and later writers, cannot be accepted as being literally correct ; but these do give an idea of the colossal loss to India's population suffered during his raids. Of course those who were converted to Islam remained a part of the Indian population but those who were killed or carried away as slaves, meant a permanent loss to India. This great loss is attested to by Alberuni at two places. Although he is not in a position to give any figures, what he says in significant : "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country. and performed there wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions...,Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us..."[1] At another place he writes : "This Hindu Shahi dynasty is now extinct, and of the whole house (Jayapala, Ananpala, Trilochanpala etc.) there is no longer the slightest remnant in existence."[2] This ruling family

1. Alberuni, *op. cit.* (IV, n. 2), I, p. 22.
2. *Ibid.*, II, p. 13.

gave a very tough resistance in which thousands and thousands perished. It "was driven from Kabul to Bhera, from Bhera to Lahore...(and)...from Lahore to Kanauj", before it was finally extinguished after a quarter of century's peristant struggle.[3] The total of figures killed in three campaigns of Mahmud (2, 12, and 16) and enslaved in three campaigns (2,10, and 12) comes to about 4,00,000. It is true that these figures undoubtedly relate to only major exploits. There were minor ones too in which demographic loss was not so great. However, the disorganized flight of the panic-striken people to distant places must have killed large numbers, through exposure, starvation, and epidemic. Mahmud carried out seventeen invasions. Therefore, to multiply this figure by five would not be unreasonable. In brief, during the first quarter of the eleventh century the loss to Indian population due to Mahmud's invasions was about 2,000,000.

3. E and D, II, Appendix, p. 462.

# APPENDIX B

## LACH TABLES

Professor Donald F. Lach of the University of Chicago and a Visiting Professor in the Department of History at the University of Delhi during 1967-68 was kind enough to lend me some demographic Tables of European countries and cities prepared by him for his own use. There are three such Tables.

The first comprises the population figures in the World and for Europe for the period 1650-1950. The second Table contains population statistics of European countries and provinces for 1550-1750 ; and is based on the works of J.C. Russell, *Ancient and Medieval Population* (Philadelphia, 1958) and the *New Cambridge Modern History*, volume VII.

The third Table gives population figures of some important European cities for 1500-1700, based primarily on extracts from R. Mols, *Introduction a la demographic historique des villes d' Europe du XIVe au XVIIIe siecles* (Paris, 1955) ; vol. II. This last Table in particular has proved to be very useful in making a demographic comparison between European and Indian cities. European visitors often compare Indian cities with those of their own countries. Population figures of many European cities are now available, helping in estimating the population of Indian cities with which the travellers compare their own. Besides, some very useful demographic information is found in Lach's *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. I, bk. II, (Chicago, 1965), p. 665 n. 86. But wherever reference to the Tables prepared by Professor Lach is made, it is simply mentioned as Lach Tables."

TABLE III

*European Cities, 1500-1700*

| Area | City | Date | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Italy* | Naples** | 1500 | 150,000 |

* Fuller data on the population of the Italian cities is available than for any other region of Europe.

**Around 1606, Naples was evidently after Constantinople the largest city in Europe. Paris was only 200,000.

| Area | City | Date | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1547 | 212,103 |
| | | 1606 | 280,746 |
| | | 1656 | 300,000 (Great Plague Year in which 130,000 died) |
| | | 1688 | 186,354 |
| | Milan | 1600 | 180,216 |
| | | 1700 | 100,000 |
| | Venice | 1563 | 168,627* |
| | | 1700 | 130,000 |
| | Rome | 1526 | 55,035 |
| | | 1600 | 109,729 |
| | | 1699 | 135,000 |
| **Germany | Cologne | 1500 | 35,000 |
| | | 1600 | 30,000 |
| | Hamburg | 1500 | 20,000 |
| | | 1600 | 45,000 |
| | Augsburg | 1500 | 21,000 |
| | | 1600 | 45,000 |
| | | 1635 | 16,432 |
| | | 1645 | 21,018 |
| | Berlin (old city) | 1600 | 14,000 |
| | | 1650 | 8,000 |
| | Berlin (old city and suburbs) | 1688 | 56,000 |
| | | 1700 | under 100,000 |
| | Vienna | 1550 | 30,000 |
| | | 1700 | over 100,000 |

* Highest figure reached by Venice before 19th century.

**Generally speaking, aside from the ravages of the Thirty Years' War, you see a decline in the relative size of the old commercial centres and the growth of the new capital cities of the states.

| Area | City | Date | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| France | Paris* | 1600 | 200,000 |
| | | 1700 | 350,000 |
| | Lyon | 1700 | 50,000 |
| | Marseille | 1700 | 50,000 |
| | Rouen | 1700 | 50,000 |
| | Lille | 1700 | 50,000 |
| | Bordeaux | 1700 | 40,000 |
| Iberia | Seville | 1587 | 120,519 |
| | | 1700 | 80,000 |
| | Lisbon | 1527 | 58,860 |
| | | 1629 | 110,800 |
| | | 1700 | 73,000 |
| | Madrid | 1600 | 60,000 |
| | | ca. 1650 | 75,000 |
| | | ca. 1700 | 100,000 |
| Low Countries | | | |
| | Antwerp | 1500 | 50,000 |
| | | 1560 | 100,000 |
| | | 1600 | 45,000 |
| | | 1699 | 67,132 |
| | Brussels | 1600 | 50,000 |
| | | 1700 | 80,000 |
| | Amsterdam | 1514 | over 10,000 |
| | | 1557 | 35,000 |
| | | 1622 | over 100,000 |
| | | ca. 1700 | ca. 180,000 |
| England** | | | |
| | London (old city) | 1500 | 40,000 |
| | | 1600 | 70,000 |

*Practically no exact information available. Its growth was very rapid under the Bourbons, however, and by 1789 it had an estimated population of 600,000.

**London was the only city of consequence in the British Isles. In 1801, London with its 900,000 inhabitants was still the only city in England with more than 100,000.

| Area | City | Date | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | London (old city and suburbs) | 1600 | 170,000 |
| | | 1636 | 270,000 |
| | | 1700 | 550,000 |
| Russia | | | |
| | Moscow | 1550 | 95,000 |
| Ottoman Empire | | | |
| | Constantinople | 1453 | 36,000* |
| | | 1573 | 300,000** |

*one of the lowest periods in its history and one of the lowest estimates for that date.

**Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 133, believes that this figure derived from the report of a Venetian ambassador is highly exaggerated.

# APPENDIX C

## HINDU-MUSLIM PROPORTION IN C. 1800

We have on many occasions referred to Edward Thornton's *Gazetteer of the Territories Under the Government of the East India Company* in four volumes (1854). It provides information on a variety of subjects usually contained in a Gazetteer, but its unique feature is that it gives population statistics of most of the cities and districts of India for the pre-census period of A.D. 1800-1850. Thornton collected his data from a number of sources like the *Indian Legislative Dispatches*, *Parliamentary Return* of April, 1851, Heber's *Narrative of Journal*, *East India Company Manuscript Documents*, Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections*, Butters's *Topography of Oudh*, Garden's *Tables of Routes*, and most important of all, reports of Madras Census and other censuses locally held. Some of the information provided by Thornton is reproduced here to give an idea of Hindu-Muslim proportion about the year 1800 at which our study closes. The figures are for the period ranging between 1800 and 1851, but these, by and large, can convey a fair idea of the population of important cities and districts and Hindu-Muslim ratio about the year A.D. 1800.

In 1800 many cities of the Sultanate period had completely disappeared, many of the Mughal period had declined. Many new cities and towns had come into being and had got well-populated. Under the Mughals Delhi, Agra, Ahmedabad, Burhanpur and Banaras, to mention only a few, were very populous. In the eighteenth century their population had declined substantially, while Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had shot into prominence. It would be the best to cite from Thornton himself at some length to appreciate the situation.

"Numerous as are the towns and cities of India, none are remarkable for the amount of their population. That of Calcutta, independently of its suburbs, has been recently returned at 413, 182. No census has yet been taken of the city of Madras (it is officially assumed at 720,000); but Bombay, with its suburbs, and including also the floating population in its harbuor, contains 566,

199 inhabitants. Throughout the whole extent of the North-West provinces no one city can boast of a (large) population; Delhi has only 137,997, Cawnpore 108,796, Banaras 183,491, Bareilly 92, 208, ...(and) Agra 66,003."[1]

We have already discussed the causes of the decline of Indian population in general and of some cities in particular in the eighteenth century. Decline apart, the shifting of people to new cities by itself did not disturb the Hindu-Muslim ratio as such. The notices of some places given below bring out the picture of Hindu-Muslim ratio clearly. According to Thornton's estimate it stood at 6:1 in c. 1850; it was probably 7:1 in 1800.

The information collected from Thornton's Gazetter has been classified under three Tables. Table I contains population figures of districts and princely states grouped state or region-wise. It is very interesting to note that for princely states no break-up of Hindu-Muslim population is available. Table II contains population statistics of important cities and towns. Table III, though small and furnished only as a specimen, shows how in some towns and villages there was concentration of one or the other community.

1. Notices under 'India', Vol II, p. 120

**Table 1**

*Population Statistics of Districts and Princely States*

| District | Year of Estimate and authority | Total Population | Muslim Population | Percentage of Muslims in the total population | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| North Western Provinces (now U.P.) | | 23,199,668 | 3,747,022 | 16.2 | Muslims include other non-Hindus |
| Agra | | 828,220 | 85,557 | 10.3 | ditto |
| Allahabad | Statistics of the N.W. Prov. 1848 Shakespear, p. 168 | 710,263 | 95,740 | 13 4 | ditto |
| Aligarh | 1848 | 739,356 | 87,564 | 11.8 | ditto |
| Avadh (Oude) | | 2,970,000 | | | "The Mussulmans are for the most part Shia." |
| Azamgarh | | 1,313,950 | 156,917 | 11.9 | Weavers all Muslims |
| Banda | Parliamentary Return, 1851 | 552,526 | 16,007 | 2.8 | |
| Bareilly | Mem. on Statistics of N.W. Prov., 1848, p. 169 | 1,143,657 | 113,594 | 9.9 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Banaras | | 741,426 | 65,376 | 8.8 | Muslims include other non-Hindus |
| Bijnor | Statistics of N.W. Prov., 1848 | 620,546 | 44,343 | 7.1 | ditto |
| Bulandshahr | | 699,393 | 128,542 | 18.4 | Muslims include other non-Hindus |
| Badaon | | 825,712 | 113,645 | 13.8 | Muslims include other non-Hindus |
| Cawnpore (Kanpur) | 1848, Shakespear, Memoir on Statistics of N.W. Provinces | 993,031 | | | |
| Dehradun | Memoir on Statistics of N.W. Provinces 1848, p. 179 | 32,083 | 8,693 | 27.0 | |
| Delhi | Parl. Return, April 1851 | 306,550 | 92,036 | 30.0 | ditto |
| Etawah | 1848 | 481,224 | 25,862 | 5.4 | ditto "Hindoos constitute an overwhelming majority of population" |
| Farukhabad | *Ibid.*, p. 169 | 854,799 | 101,375 | 11.8 | |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fatehpur | Parl. Return, 1851 | 511,132 | 50,671 | 9.9 | "Hindoos form by far the large proportion". |
| Ghazipore | Shakespear, Memoir, 1848, p. 169 | 1,059,287 | 113,868 | 10.7 | |
| Gorakhpur | Census taken, 1848 | 2,376,533 | 265,608 | 11.2 | Muslims include other non-Hindoos. |
| Hamirpur | 1848, Actual Enumeration | 452,091 | 32,408 | 7.2 | ditto |
| Jaunpur | 1848, Census | 798,503 | 78,672 | 9.8 | ditto |
| Meerut | 1847, Census 'Stated to have been taken very correctly'. | 860,736 | 203,899 | 23.6 | ditto |
| Mirzapore | Parl. Return 1851 | 831,388 | 48,641 | 5.8 | "The population is almost exclusively Hindoo, the Mahomedans being comparatively few." |
| Moradabad | Latest Official Return, 1847 | 997,362 | 336,891 | 33.8 | Muslims include all non-Hindus. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Muzaffarnagar | Recent Census, 1847 | 537,594 | 146,949 | 27.3 | ditto |
| Mutra (Mathura) | Official Return, 1848 | 701,688 | 52,996 | 7.6 | " |
| Mainpuri | Census made, 1848 | 639,809 | 39,820 | 6.2 | " |
| Saharanpur | Statistics of N.W. Provinces, p. 169. | 547,353 | | | |
| Shahjahanpur | Official Return, 1848 | 812,588 | 252,002 | 31.0 | " |
| **Bihar and Bengal** | | | | | |
| Backergunge | C. 1841 | 733,800 | | | Christians in large numbers. Hindu-Muslim 6:1. |
| Behar (fr. Distt. under Bengal) | | 2,500,000 | | | Hindu-Muslim 4:1, "an unusually large proportion" of Muslims. |
| Bhagalpur | | 2,000,000 | | 23.0 | "Muhammadans twenty-three in a hundred". |
| Bankura (Bogoorah) | Parliamentary Return, April 1851 | 900,000 | | | Large proportion Muslim 'not easy to account'. |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Burdwan | E.I.C Ms. Doc. Statistics of the British possessions | 1,854,152 | 309,025 | 16.6 | Muslims 1/6 of the population. |
| Chittagong | 1845 | 1,000,000 | no information | | |
| Dacca | Parl. Return, April, 1851 | 600,000 | | | Musalmans more numerous than Brahmanists, but Kunch and Rajbansi tribe people in large numbers. |
| Dinajpur | | 1,200,000 | 840,000 | 70.0 | Hindu-Muslim ratio 3:7. |
| Faridpur | Parl. Return, 1851 Jaquemont, VI, p. 342. | 855,000 | | | Musalmans more numerous in Southern part, Hindus in North. |
| Jessore | E.I C. Ms.Doc. Statistics of the British possessions. | 381,744 | | 50.0 | Hindu-Muslim 50-50. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maldah | Parl. Return, 1851 | 431,000 | | "It is not improbable that the Mussulmans may outnumber the Brahmanists." |
| Midnapore | ditto | 533,063 | | Some Mohamedans, considerable number of Hindus, and remainder of various denominations. |
| Monghyr | Bengal and Agra Guide, 1842 | 800,000 | | "The number of Mussulmans is small.. the district is divided into forty pergunnahs and contains 3,410 towns, villages and hamlets." |
| Murshidabad | Bengal and Agra Guide, 1842 Parl. Report, 1851 | 1,045,060 | 66.0 | Mahammedans are two-thirds. 'An estimate made in 1829 by the magistrate of the Zillah, exhibits a decided preponderence of the number of the Hindoos". |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mymensingh | Parl. Return, 15 April, 1851 | 1,487,000 | | 50.0 | Hindus and Muslims 50-50 |
| Nuddea | Hamilton Gazetteer, p. 327, 1802 | 764,430 | 286,631 | 37.4 | |
| Palamau | Bengal and Agra Guide, 1841 | 482,900 | no information | | This includes the population of Chhota Nagpur. |
| Patna | Parl. Return 1851 | 1,200,000 | | | |
| Pubna | ditto | 600,000 | | | |
| Purneah | Buchanan, iii, Append. 697 | 1,600,000 | 688,000 | 43.0 | Buchanan estimates double this number and proportion Hindus 57:43 Muslims. |
| Rajmahal | Buchanan, II, p. 79 | 30,000 | 12,900 | 43.0 | |
| Rajshahee | Parl. Return 1851 | 671,000 | | | "The majority of the population are Hindoos ; the Mussulmans are in considerable numbers, and amongst them the Patans are the most numerous." |
| Ramgarh otherwise called Hazaribagh | Hamilton Gazetteer II,p. 452 | 5,000,000 | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rangpoor | Statistics of Sugar Cultivation, Calcutta, 1848 | 2,559,000 | | | |
| Sarun | Bengal and Agra Guide, 1841, II, Pt. I, p. 257 | 1,700,000 | | | "With the exception of three Christian Villages, and a few European settlers, (the inhabitants) consist exclusively of Hindoos and Mussulmans in the proportion of six of the former to one of the latter". |
| Shahabad | Parl. Return, 1851<br>Another Official Estimate | 1,600,000<br>1,602,274 | 94,251 | 5.8 | Hindoo and Muslim proportion 16:1 |
| Tipperah | | 1,406,000 | | | |
| Tirhoot | | 2,400,000 | | | |
| Twenty four Parganahs | Parl. Return, 1851 | 288,000 | | | Majority Brahminists; Muslims also considerable. |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assam | Parl. Return, 1851 | 710,000 | | 16.0 | Muslims estimated a sixth of the whole "The Mohamedans of Assam are not remarkable for rigid adherence to the tenets or the practices of their faith, and are held in low esteem. |
| Sylhet Distt. | | 380,000 | | 40.0 | Three-fifths Brahmanists. |
| Orissa | Parl. Return, 1851 | 4,534,183 | | | Population "generally dominated by the Hindoos". |
| Sambalpore (including hill parts) | | 800,000 | | | Great mass of Hindoos is low-caste. Landholders claim to be Rajput. |
| Punjab and Sind | | | | | |
| Bhawalpur | | 600,000 | | | "Great majority..... Mohammadans". |
| Gurgoan | Jacquemont, VI. p. 333 | 460,326 | 178,818 | 38.8 | Muslims include other non-Hindus. |
| Haryana | Mem. Statistics of N.W. Prov. p. 169. | 225,086 | 49,066 | 21.8 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ludhiana | | 121,000 | | | "The number being of males only". |
| Five Divisions of the Punjab | | 7,000,000 | | | From Beas to Chenab Hindus predominate with Mohammadans interspersed in majority in the South. From Chenab to Indus, the population chiefly consists of Hindu converts to Mohammdanism. |
| (i) Jhelum | Leech, Report on Commerce of Mooltan, p. 87 | 1,116,035 | | | |
| (ii) Lahore | | 2,470,817 | | | |
| (iii) Leh | Acc. of Caubul, 27 | 1,500,000 | | 66.6 | "Of the whole population two-thirds are Mohammedan (both spurious and genuine) the remaining one-third are chiefly Hindus, and half of these are Sikhs". |
| (iv) Multan | | 500,000 | | 66.6 | |
| (v) Jalandhar | | 569,722 | | 66.6 | |
| Panipat | 1848 | 283,420 | | | Muslims include other non-Hindus. |
| Patiala | Parl. Return, 1851 | 662,752 | 97,226 | 14.6 | |
| Rohtak | Latest Return 1846-47 | 294,119 | 62,006 | 21.0 | |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sindh (Province) | | 1,087,762 | | | |
| Kashmir | C. 1800 | 800,000 | | | |
| Rajputana | | 11,000,000 | | | Area 114,391 sqr. miles. |
| Doongarpoor | | 100,000 | | | |
| Jaipur | Estimate | 1,891,124 | | | |
| Jaisalmer | | 74,400 | | | |
| Jodhpur | Estimate | 1,783,600 | | | |
| Kotah | | 433,900 | | | |
| Merta (Jodhpur) | Boileau, Rajwade | 25,950 | | | |
| Tonk | India Pol. Disp. 20 Feb. 1850 | 182,672 | | | |
| Udaipur | Estimate only | 1,161,400 | | | Tod states that in 1818 the number of houses, formaly 50,000, diminished to 3,000. |
| **Gujarat and Central India** | | | | | |
| Khandesh | Census of 1851 | 778,112 | | | Inhabitants principally Marathas |
| Chhatarpur (M.P.) | | 120,000 | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Damoh (M.P.) | | 351,495 | 12,089 | 3.4 | "Hindoos greatly predominate". |
| Hoshangabad (M.P.) | Recent census figures by conjectural means | 242,642 | 11,488 | 4.7 | |
| Indore (Raj) | Statistics of Native States | 815,164 | | | A few Mohammedons |
| Jabalpur | | 798,503 | | | |
| Jhansi (Raj) | Estimated 1832 | 286,000 | | | |
| Jhallawar (Distt. in Kathiawar) | Jacob, 74, 75. | 240,325 | | | |
| Kathiawar (Province of Gujarat) | Parliamentary Return, April 1851 | 1,468,900 | | | |
| Kathiawar Distt. | | 189,840 | | | A few Muslims |
| Nagpur (State) | 1825<br>1851 | 2,470,752<br>4,650,000 | 58,368 | 2.4 | Gonds 291,603. |
| Navanagar (Nowanaggur) | | 207,680 | | | |
| Pahlunpore (petty state, Bombay Pres.) | Statistics relating to India | 130,000 | | 14.2 | One-seventh are Muslims, the rest Hindoos. |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poona (Collectorate) | Parl. Return 1851 | 666,006 | | | Mostly Marathas, Gujaratis, and 'not a few Mussulmans'. Also some Bohras. |
| Panna (Bundelkhand) | In 1832 DCruz, Political Relations, | 67,000 | | | 1062 Villages, 688 sqr. miles. |
| Rajpeepla (State) | India Statistics, p. 30 | 122,100 | | | Area 1,650 sqr. miles. |
| Rewah (Raj) | Jacquemont | 1,200,000 | | | |
| Ratlam (distt. including Sailana) | Statistics of Native States | 91,728 | | | |
| Ratnagherry (Collectorate, Bombay Pres.) | | 665,238 | | | Area 39,643 sqr. miles, density of pop. 170 to a sqr. mile. |
| Sholapur | | 675,115 | | | "It is stated to have materially improved". |
| South India | Parl. Return, Madras Presidency 1851 | 22,301,697 | | | |
| Arcot (Madras Presidency) | 1851 one estimate | 1,006,005 | | | |
| | Another | 1,485,873 | | 4.0 | Muslims about 1/25. |
| Bellary (Madras) | Census of 1851 | 1,229,599 | | | Hindus 18 times the number of Muslims. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cannanore | | | | Muslims and Christians only a residue. |
| Chingleput (Madras) | 1851 | 583,462 | | Muslims and Christians only a residue |
| Goa | 1844 Bombay Revenue Dispatch, 27 March, 1844 | 313,262 | | Two-thirds Christian |
| Guntoor | Parliamentary Return, April, 1851 | 570,089 | 5.6 | 1/18 Muslims |
| Hyderabad (State) | Not on actual Census | 10,666,080 | | Muslims found about the capital and in government service. |
| Madras (including Dindigul) | Madras Census 1851 | 1,756,791 | | |
| Malabar Distt. | Madras Census 1852 | 1,514,909 | | Population comprised Hindus, Muslims (Moplahs), Christians and Jews. Hindus 'nearly three-fourths of the population of the district. |
| Masulipatam | ditto | 544,672 | 5.0 | Musalmans one-twentieth of the population. |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mysore (State) | Report on Medieval Topography of Mysore. Estimate 'not altogether free from error'. | 2,002,785 better 3,000,000 | | | 'Hindoos in great majority'. |
| Nellore (distt. under Madras Pres.) | Madras Census, July 1852 | 935,690 | | | Population 'the most part Hindoo' |
| Salem | Madras Census Return, 1852 | 1,195,377 | | | |
| Salsette | Haber II, p.187 'conjecture of recent date' | 50,000 | | | density 333 per sqr. mile |
| Sattara | | 1,005,771 | | | density 90 per sqr. mile. |
| South Canara | | | | | No Muslims |
| Tanjore | | 1,676,086 | | | 'By far the larger portion are Brahminists'. |
| Tinnevelly | In 1823 Madras Census Return, 1852 | 564,957 1,269,216 | | | Rapidly rising |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Travancore (State) | Parl. Report, 1851 | 1,013,824 | "Brahmanists ... are very numerous"; 150,000 Christians |
| Tiruchirapalli | Madras Census return July 1852 | 709,196 | 20.0 Muslims 1/5 |
| Virudhupatti | Madras Census Return, July 1852 | 1,254,272 | |

## TABLE II

*Population Figures of Some Important Cities*

| City or Town | Year of Estimate and Authority | Total Population | Mus'im Population | Percentage of Muslims to total Population | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Achalgunj (Avadh) | Butter, Topogrphy of Oudh, p. 114 | 5,000 | 500 | 10.0 | |
| Agra City | 1846 | 76,570 | | | |
| Ahmadnagar | | 9,000 | | | |
| Ahmedabad | Friend of India Journal, Sept. 1852, p. 615 | 130,000 | | | |
| Ajmer | 1848 | 224,891 | 27,288 | 12.1 | Muslims include other non-Hindus. |
| Allahabad City | 1834, J.A.S.B., May 1834. p. 224 | 64,785 | 20,569 | 31.9 | Exclusive of Europeans. |
| Ambala | Parliamentary Return, April, 1851 | 67,134 | | | Hindus more than two-third. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amethi (Distt. Pratapgarh) | | 10,000 | | 25.0 | |
| Alwar | Statistical Papers, Native States | 280,000 | | | |
| Amritsar | Calcutta Revenue Report, II, p. 501 | 80,000 to 90,000 | | | |
| Amroha (Distt. Moradabad) | | 72,677 | | | |
| Arcot | | 53,474 | | | |
| Aurangabad City | 1825 | 60,000 | | | |
| Baletta (Jodhpur) | | 6,750 | 525 | 7.8 | |
| Betul (M.P.) | | 93,441 | 1,848 | 2.0 | Muslims include other non-Hindus. |
| Baroda City | Transc. of Medical and Physical Soc. of Bombay, 1838, i. 17. Gibson Sketch of the province of Guzerat | 140,000 | | | |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Behar, British Distt. Under Bengal | | 2,500,000 | | 4.1 | "25%": "an unusually large proportion of Muslims" |
| Bellary Distt. (Madras Presidency) | Census of 1851 | 1,229,599 | | 18.1 | "Hindoos eighteen times". |
| Benaras City | Calcutta Gleanings in Science, ii. 25. As. Res. XVII. 470, 498. | 183,491 | 36,409 | 19.8 | |
| Bombay City | | 566,119 | 124,155 | 21.9 | |
| Bulandshahr | | 699,393 | 128,542 | 18.4 | Muslims include other non-Hindus. |
| Burdwan City | 1814 | 7,651 (houses) | 2,164 | 28.2 | |
| Calcutta City | 1850 | 413,182 | 110,918 | 26.8 | |
| Caunpore Distt. (Kanpur) | 1848 Statistics of N.W. Province | 993,031 | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Champaner | 1812 | 300 | | | It was a great city under the sultans of Gujarat (15-16th cents.). |
| Chittagang Distt. | 1845 | 1,000,000 | no information | | |
| Cochin | 1836 | 288,176 | | | Muslim number is not great. |
| Coimbatoor | Time of Hyder Ali | 4,000 houses | | | |
| Dacca town | 1830 | 66,989 | 35,238 | 52.6 | Town recent. Not mentioned by Abul Fazl or Ferishtah |
| Cossimbazar | 1829 | 4,863 | 1,325 | 27.2 | |
| Dalmau, U.P. | Butter, Topo. of Oudh | 10,000 | 250 | 2.5 | |
| Daraganj (Allahabad) | J.A.S.B. May 1834, p. 244 | 9,103 | 1,708 | 18.3 | |
| Delhi City | 1845 Census by A. A. Roberts, Off. Collector. | 137,977 | 66,120 | 47.9 | Christians 327 |
| Datia (Bundelkhand) | Col. Sleeman, I. p. 303 | 40,000 to 50,000 | | | Almost all Hindu |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ferozpur (Punjab) | | 16,890 | | | |
| Fyzabad City | Butter, Topo. of Oudh, p. 123 | 100,000 | | | |
| Farukkhabad | Statistics of N. W. Provinces, p. 105 | 56,300 | | | |
| Gooty (Madras) | | 4,386 | | 25.0 | One-fourth Muslims. |
| Hyderabad (Nizam) | Not on actual census | 200,000 | | | Large proportion of Muhammadans. |
| Jaloun | Regularly conducted investigation | 176,297 | 11,381 | 6.4 | |
| Jeypoor (town in Orissa) | Satistics of Native States | 391,230 | | | |
| Jalandhar | | 40,000 | | | |
| Karachi | 1813<br>1815 | 13,000<br>15,000 | | 50.0<br>50,0 | Hindu-Muslim=1:1 |
| Kanauj | | 16,000 | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lahore | | 100,000 to 120,000 | | | Under the Mughal Emperors 'the population probably was eight or ten times the present number'. |
| Ludhiana | | 20,000 | | | |
| Lucknow | Estimate not certain | 300,000 | | | "There is a large proportion of Mussulmans among the Hindoos, and not a few Christians." |
| Mangalore | Medical Report on Malabar, Canara, and Madras, 1844 | 11,548 | | | |
| Masulipatam | 1837 Census | 27,884 | 3,855 | 13.8 | |
| Meerut | Statistics of N.W. Provinces, 1848 | 29,014 | | | |
| Mirzapore | Parl. Return 1851 | 79,526 | | | Few Muslims |
| Monghyr | C. 1810 Buchanan's Survey of Eastern India | 30,000 | | | |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Multan (Punjab) | Estimate only | 80,000 | | | |
| Moorshedabad | 1829 Census, J.A.S.B. | 146,176 | 56,090 | 38.4 | |
| Moradabad | Statistics of N.W. Prov. 79 | 48,880 | | | "The majority of which is Mahomedan". |
| Muzaffarnagar | 1847 Recent Census, Shakespear | 7,264 | | | |
| Mathura | 1848 Official Return | 50,000 | | | |
| Nagpur | 1825 | 115,228 | | 2.5 | 2½ per cent Muslims and rest Hindoos. |
| Nellore | Madras Census, July 1852 | 20,000 | | | Population "the most part Hindoos." |
| Patna | Buchanan's Survey | C 312,000 | | | |
| Peshawar | C 1800 | 100,000 | | | 7,706 Hindoos, rest Muslims. |
| | 1853 | 56,054 | 48,348 | 86.2 | |
| | India Rev. Dispatch, 12 January, 1853 | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pondichery | Report on Medical Topography and Statistics of Central Div. of Madras Army | 25,000 to 30,000 | | | |
| Poona | Return of Law Commission 1813 | 110,000 | | | 'Number but conjectural'. |
| | 1838 | 75,170 | | | |
| Purnea | Buchanan, ut supra, iii.51. | 50,000 | | | |
| Pratapgarh (U.P.) | Topography of Oudh, 133. | 10,000 | | 50.0 | "Of whom half are Musulmans, and almost all cultivators there being no manufacturers." |
| Patan (Anhilwara) | | 30,000 | | | Large and important town in medival India. |
| Qudhu | | 20,000 | | | ditto |
| Rajahmundry | Parl. Return 1851 | 15,000 to 20,000 | | | "Of whom the Musulmans form but a small and indigent class, though numerous Mosques." |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rameshwaram | | 4,288 | 620 | 14.4 | Annual pilgrimage estimated at 30,000. |
| Ramgarh (Hazaribagh) | ditto | 372,216 | | | |
| Rewa Town | Jaquemont | 7,000 | | | |
| Rohtak | Statistics of N.W. Provinces | 10,350 | | | |
| Ratlam | Statistics of Native States | 10,000 | | | |
| Saint Thomas Mount (10 miles S. W. of Madras | Official Statement 1837 | 17,720 | 3,500 | 19.8 | |
| Saugor | Conjectured, Spray, II, p. 54 | 50,000 | | | Majority being Marathas |
| Secunderabad | 1. Rep. of Medieval Topography 2. Statistics of Northern Division of Madras Army, p. 115 | 34,357 | | | |
| Seringapatam | Buchanan, I. P. 76 estimated in 180 (exclusive of garrison) | 150,000 (under Tippoo) | | | "Still less now (C 1850) as the town has been abandond as a military state." |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shahjahanpur | Statistics of N. W. Provinces | 62,785 | | | |
| Shikarpoor (in Sind) | Postans, 19 Burnes, on the Commerce of Shikarpoor, 24 | 30,000 | 10,000 | 33.3 | Both postans and Kennedy estimated 50,000 ; of these 10,000 Muslims, 1,000 were Patan |
| Shamsabad (Dist. Farukhabad) | Statistics of N.W. Prov. 105 | 6,920 | | | |
| Sikandarabad Distt. Bufandshahr | Statistics of N.W. Prov. 59 | 14,843 | | | |
| Singhhoom | Parl. Return 1851 | 200,000 | | | |
| Sirdhana (Distt. Meerut) | Statistics of N.W. Provinces, p. 55 | 12,841 | | | About 1,200 Christians. |
| Srinagar | C. 1800<br>Cunnigham, Hist. of the Punjab | 40,000<br>80,000 | | | |
| Somnath (Patan) | Id. 352 | 5,000 | | | "The population of the town is at present chiefly Mussulman, and there are many mosques." |
| Sootee (Dist. Murshidabad) | J.A.S.B. 1833, p. 569 | 34,662 | 28,499 | 82.2 | |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Surat | 1838 | 133,544 | | | |
| Tanjore | Report, ut Supra, 174 | 80,000 | | | |
| Tellicherry (Distt. Malabar) | Estimated | 20,000 | | | Majority Mopilahs |
| Thatta | J.R.A.S. 1834, p. 234 | 18,000 | | | |
| Trichnopoly | | 30,000 | | 20.0 | Mussulmans one-fifth of the population. |

## TABLE III

*Showing concentration of Hindus or Muslims in some towns and villages*

| Town | Year of census and authority | Total population | Muslim population | Percentage of Muslims to total population | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Akbarpoor (Avadh) | Topography of Oudh, 114. | 1,000 | | 66.6 | Two-third Muslims All weavers. |
| Aldeman (Avadh) | | 400 | 300 | 75.0 | |
| Aliganj (Dist. Sultanpur U.P. | Topography of Oudh, 115. | 100 | | 0 | All Hindus |
| Attanagar (Dist. Salon, Avadh) | Butter's Estimate | 6,000 | | 66.6 | Two-thirds Musalmans All cultivators |
| Balia | Topography of Oudh, 116. | 6,000 | | 0 | All Hindus |
| Bhadinya (Dist. Sultanpur, Avadh) | Butter Topograph of Oudh. | 2,000 | 100 | 5.0 | |
| Bhojpur (Dist. Bainswara, Avadh) | Topography of Oudh, 119. | 9,000 | 150 | 1.6 | |
| Gonda | Butter, Topograpy of Avadh, p. 125 | 2,000 | | | All Hindus except about 50 Muslim weavers. |
| Jambo (Dist. Salon, Avadh) | | 7,000 | | 50.0 | Muslims half. |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jayes (Dist. Salon, Avadh) | Butter Topography of Oudh, p. 127 | 9,000 | | 75.0 | Three-fourths Muslims |
| Jaunsar (British Hill Dist. connected with Dehra Dun) | Rough Census in 1847 | 24,684 | 24 | 0.1 | |
| Qasur (Punjab) | | | | | All Muslims |
| Manikpur (U.P.) | Butter, p. 129 Tennant, II, p. 35 | 10,000 | | 50.0 | |

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